



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

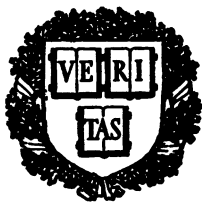
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

FL 1664 A

FA 656.6(1)

B

Harvard College  
Library

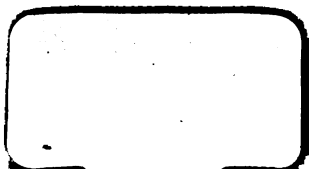


FROM THE BEQUEST OF

Lucy Osgood

MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

TRANSFERRED TO  
FINE ARTS LIBRARY







# ITALIAN CITIES

VOL. I.



©  
**ITALIAN CITIES**

**BY**

**EDWIN HOWLAND BLASHFIELD  
AND  
EVANGELINE WILBOUR BLASHFIELD**

**VOLUME I**



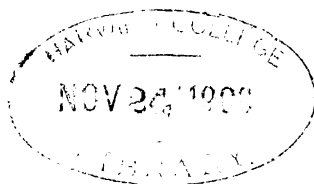
**NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1900**



FA 656.6 (1)

23

1-11



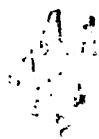
Lucy Osborn fund  
(2 v.)

*Copyright, 1900*

BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

---

UNIVERSITY PRESS • JOHN WILSON  
AND SON • CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.



# CONTENTS

## OF THE FIRST VOLUME

---

### RAVENNA

	PAGE
I. A BYZANTINE RELIQUARY . . . . .	3
II. THE ART OF THE CHRISTIAN. SCULPTURE .	14
III. ARCHITECTURE. MOSAIC . . . . .	27
IV. BEYOND THE WALLS . . . . .	38

### SIENA

I. GENERAL ASPECT OF THE CITY. THE PALAZZO PUBBLICO . . . . .	47
II. THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL . . . . .	67
III. THE PRIMITIVE PAINTERS . . . . .	73
IV. THE SIENESE SCHOOL OF PAINTING . .	89
V. SIENESE ART PATRONS . . . . .	100
VI. THE SIEGE OF SIENA . . . . .	110
VII. THE CATHEDRAL . . . . .	130
VIII. PINTURICCHIO . . . . .	136
IX. BAZZI . . . . .	145

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE FLORENTINE ARTIST . . . . .	167
IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA . . . . .	201
PARMA	
I. THE DUCAL CITY . . . . .	257
II. CORREGGIO . . . . .	276

---

### ERRATA.

Page 157, ninth line from top, for *were*,  
read *wove*.

Page 159, fifteenth line from top, for  
*brought*, read *bought*.



# RAVENNA

## I

THE traveller who to-day goes from Rome to Florence by rail, through the noble mountains of Tuscany and Umbria, bridges in a seven hours' journey a gap of ten centuries in the history of art. He leaves behind him the temples and arches, the Vatican's marble population of half-nude gods and heroes; he comes to mediæval towers, to saints and virgins, and the frescoed folk of the fourteenth century swathed in their heavy garments. The abrupt transition bewilders him; the sudden change in his artistic surroundings is almost inexplicable. How did it come to pass? The gods and athletes did not all die at once, nor the saints spring fully armed with attribute and symbol from the brain of Giotto; surely there was some intermediate period of anticipation and recollection when these incongruous elements were slowly fused together, and when some dim projection of the mediæval saint stood side by side with a fast-fading memory of the antique demigod.

## ITALIAN CITIES

To find the vanished centuries that wrought this transformation one must ride northeast for seven hours more to the Adriatic marshes. Fourteen hundred years ago, when Italy flamed behind the horsemen of Alaric, the Emperor Honorius fled to the strongest city in the land, Ravenna, and with his corrupt and motley court went one noble fugitive, the genius of the Arts, who illustrates for all time the name of her asylum.

In those days Ravenna was still a port; but the sea, which made her greatness, has by receding destroyed her political importance, thus leaving her to hold the more surely, in her slow decay, the buildings of a time which she alone among cities fully represents, a time when pictorial Christian art had just emerged from her prenatal condition of the catacombs into the light of imperial favor, and the architecture of the Roman was beginning to be that of the Christian. Thus Ravenna became the splendid reliquary which preserved the dry bones of antique art to be quickened by the breath of the Renaissance. A unique link in the chain, she is the anomaly of Italian towns,—a city of antitheses; of pure water in the midst of poisonous marshes, of impregnable refuge among treacherous morasses.

Saved and lifted to high fortune by her submerged territory, when all Italy elsewhere sunk under the waves of barbarian invasion; guarded, not besieged

## RAVENNA

by the pestilence which walked without her walls, she is antithetical even in superficial appearance, and until our own times. Without are mean streets and rough façades ; within, color and splendor ; advanced radicalism to-day has usurped the stronghold of Greek hierarchy ; upon her friezes are the gaunt and wasted faces of the Byzantine women, and in her thoroughfares are the most beautiful of Italian girls.

Ravenna is the end of the old, the beginning of the new. "Toward Rome all ancient history tends, from Rome all modern history springs ;" but here for a brief moment the broad current of history was dammed up into this little space, then ebbing away even as the Adriatic has done, it left Ravenna full of strange, stranded monuments of a time that has elsewhere been swept out upon the tide into the ocean of oblivion.

Among the graves of the buried past, the sarcophagi of exarchs, captains, and priests, which lie scattered in the churches and the streets, — waifs from the shipwreck of Italy when Alaric burst upon her, — are the sepulchres and effigies of three rulers who epitomize the art-history of the city : of Galla Placidia, the conquered Roman princess, who subjugated in her turn and married her captor, and preserved to Ravenna what remained of old-time splendor ; of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, who infused the vigor of the north into worn-out forms ; of Justinian the



## ITALIAN CITIES

Emperor, who dowered the city with the art heritage of the Greek. The mausoleum of Placidia and the Baptistery represent the first of the three groups into which the buildings of the city fall; those remains of the Theodosian epoch being followed by the works of the Ostrogothic period, San Apollinare Nuovo and the tomb of Theodoric, while the last group, that of Justinian, boasts San Vitale and "Saint Apollinaris in the Fleet." The little mausoleum of Placidia may claim a first visit. There, for eleven hundred years, her body sat upright in jewelled ceremonies in her sarcophagus, and was the very type of her city's mission. For in Ravenna antique art grew rigid, swathed away in the embalming-cloths of conventionality, gilded and stiffened, mummied within the stone walls till, eight centuries having rolled by, the spirit of antiquity arose again and the chrysalis was forgotten, even as Galla's actual body crumbled in fire and ashes at a moment when the Renaissance had attained its full strength. Eleven centuries Galla sat in state, diademed and jewelled, in the darkness, but in 1577 some children, peering through an aperture in her sarcophagus, wishing to see better, thrust in a lighted brand; and she was burned, — robes, cypress-wood chair, and all, — a strangely grotesque ending of this grim memorial; for, with all its beauty, her little church stands as a monument to three invasions, and to the beginning of

## RAVENNA

such slaughter, misery, and depopulation as the world has not seen before or since. The little church is under the invocation of Saints Nazarius and Celsus, is only forty-six feet long by forty broad, and upon the outside might be taken for some house in which the workmen were wont to lay away their tools at night. Inside it is as if one had crept into the heart of a sapphire. Blue, the blue that glistens jewel-like on the peacock's neck, is the prevailing color, with great gold disks and drinking stags and dull red borderings. Here one may put on the robe of a catechumen and be of a church, which, tiny as is the building, stands erect at its full height, omnipotent over conquerors and conquered, among pagans to be dispersed and barbarians to be converted.

Upon its vaults and friezes, as upon the leaves of a missal, Christianity has written in jewelled letters for all men to read, and in the midst of a tottering world this new handwriting on the wall appeared to the Belshazzar of the Roman decadence. To read it aright to-day, some of the historical conditions of the time must be studied. These mosaic pictures expressed the momentous changes of their age, and a new art was announced in their forms and colors.

The earlier Cæsars and the founders of the Church had alike been in their graves for nearly four centuries, but the Roman empire had decayed

## ITALIAN CITIES

and fallen, while the persecuted Church of Christ had arisen, though with a strangely altered spirit, to a mighty stature. Of the epoch which, reaching from about 400 A.D. to 565, includes the buildings of Galla, Theodoric, and Justinian, Byzantium was the real theatre, Ravenna only an echo, but an echo which has come to us clear and distinct, while the voice of the parent city has been almost lost in the tumult of the crusades and of the Turkish conquest. The age was one of disintegration, yet one in which particles were beginning to crystallize into new and lasting shapes. The blood of the empire, poisoned by luxury and tyranny, was drained by the sword of the sectary within, of the barbarian without. Theologians massacred one another for the difference of a letter in the alphabet; the factions of the chariot races slew one another in the hippodrome and divided the whole city into two camps, while the Goth waited upon the frontier to destroy the survivors. Thousands of men, smitten with a strange madness, left family and country and fled to the desert to starve and pray and see visions, far from all human ties and duties.

It was an age of saints and schoolmen, of petty emperors and great generals; Ravenna, and Ravenna alone, has preserved it for us in the traces of that strange civilization of Constantinople which lingered on for a thousand years till the sword of the Moslem

## RAVENNA

gave the death-blow to what had been so long in dying. Rome was no more, and with the founding of Constantinople a new order of things began. The city which rose upon the Bosphorus inherited the vices but not the virtues of paganism; the military spirit, the religious toleration, the perfect administration, of antique Rome disappeared. Outside, the barbarian was more frequently bribed than driven from the frontier, alternately betrayed and defended by venal generals. The city, unmindful of its danger, abandoned itself to its passions for brawling and chattering. The strife of the rival chariot factions, the greens and the blues, filled the streets with bloody tumult and shook the throne itself. Only second in popular interest were the religious dissensions; and all classes, from the Emperor to the fisherman, joined in these struggles. The subtile Greek intellect, ever given to word-spinning, seized upon the dogmas of the new faith, tore them to shreds, pieced them together again, broidered them over with new devices, and, like Penelope of old, spent days and nights in weaving and ravelling the tangled web of theology. The Sophists rose to life again in the heresiarchs and churchmen, and there came no new Socrates to silence them. Disputation grew deadly. What had been mere difference of opinion with those who were but *seekers* after truth became matter of life and

## ITALIAN CITIES

death with those who arrogantly claimed to have *found* the truth.

The annals of the time are filled with these fierce outbursts of sectarian hatred ; mad riots ; œcumenical councils packed with armed ruffians and savage Nitrian monks, where, after the inevitable violence and bloodshed, a heavy bribe to the Emperor's cook or chief eunuch settled the doctrinal point at issue. For the Emperor was grand inquisitor in matters of faith, the Empress not inactive ; and more than once, to quote the words of Cyril, "the holy Virgin of the court of heaven found an advocate in the holy Virgin of the court of Constantinople."

The citizen who had left far behind him the days of the palæstra and the academy, now decked in curiously embroidered garments and loaded with jewels, passed his time in the circus, an eager partisan of the greens or blues ; tarred on his favorite bishop in the hotter strife of the synod ; applauded some popular preacher in the churches, or, stripped of his adornments, walked barefoot in penitential procession.

The schools of philosophy were closed, and human reason, lulled to sleep by formulæ, dreamed fitfully or muttered incoherently in nightmare creed quarrels. The Church was the great career open to ambition, and as human energy rushed impetuously into the new channel, the artists were now enlisted in its service.

## RAVENNA

Through its first centuries of faith and charity Christian dogma was so simple, its ideal so constantly present in men's minds, that no palpable image was needed to explain the one or recall the other, but in the later days of dogmatic definition, when the churchmen were tying up their faith in orthodox packets, the artists were required to label them with all the quaint figures of ecclesiastical heraldry. "Pictures are the books of the ignorant," said Saint Augustine, and to teach the ignorant the Church used them, clothing the teaching, as did her founder, in the garb of symbolism, — a language that could be understood by the barbarian and the slave. But in what material should these eternal truths be expressed? Painting and sculpture were pagan and aristocratic, governed entirely by antique tradition; devils inhabited the statues of heathen gods, and before the image of the Emperor many a Christian had gone to martyrdom. There remained a minor art unpolluted by heathen worship, used for merely decorative purposes to ornament a fountain, line a niche, or enliven a pavement. This could be safely employed without evoking comparisons in the minds of the less devout or more artistic worshippers. Just as a converted heathen slave might rise from one church dignity to another until he ascended the bishop's throne, so mosaic, at first a cheerful house-

## ITALIAN CITIES

hold decoration, when Christianized became solemn, hieratic, exchanged its dress of simple colors for a gorgeous robe of purple and gold, climbed to church wall and dome, and there set forth the mysteries of the faith and the glories of heaven. Yet this new art was pagan in form and feeling; as the fathers of the Church imitated the language of Plato or Seneca, so the Christian artist borrowed the imagery of paganism for the service of his faith. It was the spirit of antiquity that animated him; its serenity, its cheerful acceptance of inevitable law, its keen sense of the beauty of life, were strong within him as he carved the sarcophagus or decorated the apse.

There were no images of suffering or punishment, no crucifixion, no last judgment, not even a martyrdom, though the young Church was still ruddy from her baptism of blood. When later the art that had its humble origin in the night of the catacombs flourished in an imperial city on the walls of mighty basilicas, its spirit was unchanged. The conversion of Rome had left it unconverted. Greek example, Greek moderation, still guided the artist's hand, for the true artist is ever half a pagan. So, fraught with a new meaning, the imagery of paganism found ready welcome within the Church. Here we still see the vintage trodden out by loves, only now it is the vintage of the Lord; the winged funeral

## RAVENNA

genii become guardian angels of the Christian's tomb: the crown of the Emperor, the reward of the blessed; the palm of the victorious athlete, the martyr's emblem. The goddesses yield their attributes: the dove becomes the visible sign of the Holy Spirit; Juno's peacock the symbol of immortality; Diana's stag the hart of the Psalmist; and as in these same mosaics the Magi bring gifts to the Mother of God, so each dethroned goddess pays tribute to the new Queen of Heaven. Diana's crescent, Minerva's serpent, lie beneath her feet; Cybele gives the chair of state; Circe the aureole; Juno the matron's veil and crown; Flora her roses and lilies, and Isis places the Divine Child in Mary's arms. Here even are the heroes of Greek myth, chosen for some likeness to the founder of Christianity: Mercury leading the spirits of the departed; Orpheus, who descended into hell to save a soul, and who draws all men to him by the power of music; Hercules, who came into the world to punish the wicked, to deliver the oppressed, to do the tasks and bear the burdens of others. In this Christianized Pantheon there are no new images; Egypt and Phœnicia contributed the fish, the cross, the ship struggling through the waves, and the lamb. The Good Shepherd — loveliest figure of all — was a precious heritage from Greece.



## II

MOSAIC had borrowed its motives from the declining art of sculpture. The marbles which fill the Ravennese streets and churches will reveal the extent of these obligations. The sarcophagi and capitals, some of them roughly and coarsely executed, others of a relatively high degree of artistic excellence, show the same subjects treated with the same decorative feeling that we have seen on wall and dome. But these Christian monuments, with their doves and peacocks and stags, enlaced in a tangle of vine and acanthus leaves, are the valedictorians of a dying art. In looking at them we feel that the race of sculpture has run its course. As the long line of Florentine sculptors ended in a clever goldsmith, so antique sculpture degenerated into the carving of mere decorative motives, and with notable exceptions, like the ivory throne of Archbishop Maximian, it is clumsy carving. To no other art had the new faith proved as fatal, and the decline of sculpture is synchronous with the rise of Christianity.

For sculpture is essentially a Pagan art: its true province is the nude human body; its aim is the

## RAVENNA

exposition of corporal strength and beauty. In ancient Greece, where the national manners and customs, ethics and ideals, favored its development, it reached its meridian of glory. In the service of religion it transformed the athlete into a god, the fair woman into a goddess. It may be truly said of the Greek sculptor that he had drawn the gods down to earth and raised mortals to heaven. Consequently sculpture was the consummate expression in art of the genius of a nation which worshipped physical perfection as the gift of the immortals, which honored the gods by athletic games and choral dances, and whose deities wore the flesh and shared the nature of men. The concrete result of this spirit, of this glorification of the flesh, this keen æsthetic sense, this cultivation of the body, is Greek sculpture. The Roman conquerors accepted the traditions and shared the feelings of the vanquished Greeks. The young mother still prayed in the temple of Venus that her child might be fair. The youth still wrestled and ran in the gymnasia. Nudity was holy. "*Deus nudus est*," wrote Seneca, and Roman flattery could find no greater tribute to pay the Emperor than to carve his statue naked "like a god."

The empire grew old and weak; and when the time was ripe came the conversion of Rome and the triumph of Christianity, — a triumph that was fatal

## ITALIAN CITIES

to antique sculpture. A new spirit unknown before had come into the world, a spirit of active benevolence and self-sacrifice, of active destruction and persecution. The Pagan victors had left their gods to the conquered; they themselves frequently honored and adopted them; religious intolerance was unknown to the Empire, and Rome was the Pantheon of the world. But to the Christian who literally interpreted the words "he who is not with me is against me," the Pagan temples and statues were an offence and an abomination. He unhesitatingly accepted the miracles which the superstitious Pagans asserted had been wrought by their sacred images; he believed the prophecies of the oracles, but he never doubted that they were the work of devils seeking to delude mankind, and that the duty of every true Christian was to destroy them. And as a doctrine of demolition is generally acceptable to the popular mind, the work was done only too well.

When it is remembered that the young Church was largely recruited from the lowest classes of society, the disinherited of the earth, it will be easily understood how no æsthetic scruple, no consideration for art, could prevent the wholesale destruction of the sacred images.

A day of wrath had come upon the gods and those who loved and worshipped them. Fierce Nitrian monks from the desert, fired with fanatical zeal,

## RAVENNA

pleasure-loving empresses in expiation of a sin or two, orthodox prelates, headed the crusade against them. Rude hands tore them from their desecrated shrines; axe and club shattered their round limbs and marred the calm faces. The bronze was cast into the furnace; the gold and ivory disappeared; the marble was thrown into the lime-kiln or rolled into the ditch. The rustic gods of vineyard, field, and garden; the chaplet-adorned Termini; the marble nymphs which protected wells and fountains; the penates that sanctified the hearth, — were ruthlessly destroyed. The holy things which for centuries had lent grace and joy to the peasants' daily toil; the grottoes hung with votive faun-skins and shepherds' pipes; the wayside shrines and sacred stones garlanded with field flowers and shining with libations, which had been sacred to generations of men and were the very soul of the land, — were broken and defiled.

Long before the work of destruction was completed, the Christian sculptor had begun to carve on the sarcophagi of the believer the images of the heathen; for like the paintings and the mosaics, this sculpture was Pagan in feeling as well as in form. Its symbols were but antique motives clumsily imitated by unskilled artists working for poor patrons. A stone-mason of the age of the Antonines would be ashamed of such bungling work. The reverence

## ITALIAN CITIES

which we feel before the martyr's tomb should not blind us to the fact that plastically this sculpture is of little value. From the first it was of an inferior character to contemporary Pagan work. Much of it is almost ludicrous in its clumsiness, its lack of technical knowledge, its poverty of invention. Most of the figures look as though they had been made by the hand of a child; so lumpish and squat are they that many of them are only four heads high. The lions in the representations of the miracle of Daniel look like puppies, and though the draped figures still preserve a certain dignity, the nude has already become grotesque, as in the façades of early churches. There are, of course, occasional exceptions, and the sarcophagi of Ravenna show us Christian sculpture at its best, notably in the altar-front of San Francesco, with its beardless, Phœbus-like Christ and the noble figures of the Apostles. The unruffled serenity of the antique spirit shows itself, however, in these rude carvings as well as in the mosaics. The mansuetude and self-restraint of the sculptor is also in direct opposition to the persecuting spirit of the Fathers of the Church, who delighted to elaborate descriptions of the torments of hell and the horrors of the judgment day, and who, believing in the guilt of error, unhesitatingly condemned both the virtuous and wicked Pagan alike to an eternity of torture.

These sculptures are invaluable to the student of

## RAVENNA

church history. In no other way is the difference between the popular conceptions of Christian teaching and the dogmas of the theologians so clearly manifested as by a comparison between the tone of the patristic writings and the spirit of contemporary art. Uninfluenced by the gloomy doctrines of Augustine and the grim asceticism of Jerome, the artists invariably chose for representation the tender and benignant aspects of their creed, which still appeal to the heart with resistless force. The beautiful story of the birth in the manger; the miracles of mercy; the Ascension; the poetic figure of the Good Shepherd, were their favorite themes. While Tertullian was gloating over the future agonies of the heathen actor and describing the torments of the charioteer writhing in the flames of hell, what were the sculptors chiselling on the believer's last resting-place? Tragic and comic masks, antique symbols signifying that life is but a player's part, to be well acted for a brief season and resigned without regret; or they carved the race-horse bounding toward the goal, — a symbol of the course of human life. The most appealing figure of them all, the Good Shepherd, is no other than the Hermes Kriophoros who saved the city of Tanagra from the plague by carrying a ram around its walls, and in whose honor Kalamis the sculptor made the votive statue which served as a point of departure to the Tanagran pot-

## ITALIAN CITIES

ters. These clay figurines of a beautiful adolescent, with the staff and petasos, and the lamb upon his shoulder, were in their turn imitated by the Christian sculptor, who found in them a singularly felicitous presentation of the benign shepherd of the most tender and poetical of the Psalms. And, indeed, the merciful god who saved the doomed city was no unfit avatar of him who saved not the city only, who bore the burden of human wrong-doing, and was himself the sacrificial lamb. Sometimes the kid was placed upon his shoulder by the sculptor, who was more compassionate than the Fathers who wrote: "He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save."

This unconscious mitigation of the cruelty and bigotry of the theologians by the artists is very significant. Art is the visible expression of the ideals of the epoch in which it is produced, and the fact that Christian art did not reflect this aspect of Christian dogma proves not only that these beliefs were confined to the learned, but that the artist was still under the dominion of Pagan habits of thought. In the humbler believers the temperate joy of the antique world still lingered, and the deity of the young faith was he who leads the soul beside the still waters and who comforts her in the valley of the shadow of death, rather than he who shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

When the doctrines of predestination, original

## RAVENNA

sin, and eternal punishment finally permeated the masses of the people, the artist was quick to feel the change in the moral atmosphere. Images of suffering and death were multiplied; the Blessed Virgin's face was painted black, and the sculptor finally accepted the tradition of the deformity of Christ, an idea as repugnant to religious feeling as it is to the plastic instinct.

Thus we trace the same Hellenic influence shaping the moribund art of the sculptor and the nascent art of mosaic. We left the mosaic-worker translating the simple symbols of the stone-cutter into the new medium of artistic expression. Mind and hand were still under the tutelage of the Pagan; and when later historic scenes were introduced, the same antique spirit characterized them. The artist's childhood might have thrilled at his grandfather's tales of the blood and martyrdom of Diocletian's time; his eyes might have looked with pride at the marks of torture for the faith existent upon the limbs of some old house-servant, yet when he made his cartoon for the mosaic he put upon it Daniel among the lions, the sacrifice of Isaac, the children unharmed amid the flames, but no more intemperate or realistic allusion to the persecutions which filled the records of the Church.

Tradition was strong within him, and the artist of Ravenna had not lost its dignity and self-restraint.



## ITALIAN CITIES

Outside, the mad controversialists might riot, — Donatist ruffians clubbing to death in default of the steel their creed forbade them, with sticks and stones a-flying ; but inside the arches of the Baptistery, at his quiet work, the artist instinctively resisted the bigotry and intolerance of his epoch. Only one ominous figure in the tomb of Placidia shows the schisms that were dividing the Church, — the figure of the Saviour burning the heretical books. By an unconscious irony it is placed directly opposite the benignant image of the Good Shepherd ; and the two conflicting aspects of Christianity — its bitter intolerance and its loving charity — confront each other in this narrow space. The sun of Greek art was setting, but it still shone upon Ravenna. The mosaicist of San Apollinare saw about him in the streets the stiff-robed Byzantines ; but he had seen, too, the pagan temples with their friezes and tympana and their figures clad in simple sweeping draperies, so that his long procession of virgins and martyrs moved in measured harmonies like the epheboi and canephoræ of the Parthenon. The grand white-robed angels, the brown-locked, beardless Christ of the apse, were calm and stately ; line and mass were still noble ; beauty had passed away, but antique dignity had survived the sack of Rome, and in a fallen Greece the memory of the Zeus at Olympia had not yet quite faded.

## RAVENNA

But it was only a tradition, not a living reality. Tradition taught the artist a certain grandeur of composition, a conventional position of head and hands, a good treatment of the general lines of the drapery, but it could do no more for him. There was no body under the drapery, no muscles to move the head or raise the hands. The face was a weakened copy of the antique type, the cranium shrunken and elongated; the great hollow eyes and pinched lips had no life in them; they could not move. What Medusa of decadence had stricken these people to stone? What had so changed the type, so utterly transformed the ideal of the artist? Where were the athletes, the gods, the goddesses, he loved so well, and how came these hollow-eyed wraiths in their place? Was it incapacity of the artist or degeneracy of the models? It was both, as the history and conditions of Byzantium show us.

The Greek of Pericles's day, when he carved a god or an athlete, went to the gymnasium or palaestra and found his model in the youths who flashed by in the foot-race; watched the evenly developed muscles strain and rise and fall in the tug of the wrestling bout; talked with the panting ephebos as he scraped the dusty oil from the limbs that were to be translated into marble.

He found the long folds of his draperies in the sweep of the procession, his faun or Bacchante in

## ITALIAN CITIES

the rhythmical changes of the choragic dance, and his fellow-citizens were his best models ; his work was patriotic, ethical ; art was yet in the service of religion, a grateful service, for the gods of that religion were idealized and deified mortals. In superior strength and beauty was their godhood made manifest and these essential attributes could be expressed in marble. Thus to the Greek the statue of his god was at once ethical and æsthetic. Ethical — for the Hermes of the palæstra spoke eloquently to the Greek youth : Exercise, be temperate, be patient, give your country a good soldier. Æsthetic — for the Greek had a love for the beauty of the human body unique in the history of art, and as beauty was to him the visible expression of the good, so a well-developed body was the highest form of beauty. Compare these conditions with those of Byzantium in the sixth century. Of the Byzantine artist was required something which cannot be expressed by form or color. A new religion had arisen, which, far from honoring the body, regarded it as an instrument of shame and degradation, its corporal instincts as temptations of the devil, its strength and beauty as a snare ; the flesh was to be mortified by fasting and penance. To the fathers of the Church it was a sin to frequent the baths or throw the discus ; better in unwashed sanctity to throw stones at heretic Arians. Greek

## RAVENNA

temperance, Roman self-control had yielded to the fanaticism which filled the desert with many a Laura, emptying the camp and the gymnasium. The world was changed; the hardy legionary had become the gilded soldier of Honorius's palace or the undisciplined Gothic mercenary, servant to-day, master to-morrow; the calm athlete, with limbs bronzed in the healthful sun of the palæstra, was replaced by the macerated ascetic, blackened and burned in the scorching African desert, and the tranquil beauty of the Greek statue gave way to the self-torturing genuflections of Stylites upon his pillar. The body was to be reduced till it became a semi-transparent envelope for the soul, a slender bond to hold the aspiring spirit to earth, and the plastic arts soon felt the influence of this asceticism.

The artists were required to give tangible form to the new ideal. To this task they were inadequate; expression, dramatic movement, strong personality they could not achieve; they could only diminish and attenuate. The body had to be covered, and they soon forgot how the members of this covered body were put together.

Costume, too, had become stiff and formal. Instead of the clinging draperies of antiquity, that showed the muscles under their folds, the Byzantines loaded themselves with heavy robes of gold embroidery, or when they wore thin tissues covered

## ITALIAN CITIES

them with whole Bible stories in needlework that falsified all natural lines. The simple mantle shrank to a cape or scarf, clumsy and stiff with jewels, and the swathed body became a mere prop for a mass of brocade and gems.

Under such conditions the artists soon forgot the lessons of the past; each new figure was but a weakened copy of some forerunner's copy, and, as at Mount Athos or in modern Russia, art-work was taught by certain well-known and unchangeable formulæ. But while art became degraded in form it grew glorious in color. This color was the gift of the East to the western world; oriental subtlety filled the intellectual atmosphere, oriental color-feeling dominated the æsthetic sense, and the sun of Greek art, which rose white and clear in the East, set in the purple and crimson that live upon the walls of Ravenna.

### III

AFTER visiting Galla's mausoleum, we follow the fortunes of those Goths who were the eastern brothers of Placidia's Ataulf, and go to San Apollinare. The basilica lifts its ugly front of blackened brick, flanked by a simple round tower, and giving no hint of its interior beauty. Within it is difficult to conceive of anything more delightful to the eye than its gold scroll-work upon blue, its dull red upon gold. There are in the world few richer decorations than the frieze of saints and virgins moving across the solemn color of the church. It is a three-aisled round-arched basilica, the friezes filling magnificently the place which developed into the triforium in later churches, while panels of mosaic cover the walls between the windows of the clerestory. "New St. Apollinaris," it is called. It was new nearly fourteen hundred years ago, and as it rose, course upon course, above the house-tops, it saw in the distance the masts of the galleys in the port of Classis, where later the bell-tower of the other church built to the same saint took their place.

## ITALIAN CITIES

When Theodoric, the heretic, raised this golden house for his Arian bishops, Martin, not Apollinaris, received the dedication, and in violet tunic still heads the procession of the saints. It was four hundred years later that fear of the Saracen caused the removal of the patron saint's bones from the Classis and gave a new name to the church. In the earlier times, when its flooring was being laid, the sound of the purple shoes of the Emperors of the West had hardly died away from the pavement of Ravenna, and after the Ostrogoths they were to come again on the feet of the exarchs of that Justinian and Theodora who still blaze upon the walls of San Vitale. A little later and the floor of the basilica heard a very different tread, and rang to the mailed heels of Charlemagne. Seizing both the shadow and the substance, the great Charles took the crown and the prestige at Rome, the columns and the bas-reliefs at Ravenna, as, guarded by Frankish soldiers, wain after wain laden with the spoils of Theodoric's palace, the white oxen of Emilia straining at the yoke, creaked away toward Ingelheim and Aix-la-Chapelle. Franks and even Lombards were, however, still in the future when the Greek workmen on their scaffolding above the capitals stood before the growing frieze, laboriously building with little cubes of gold and color this "Palatium" of Theodoric, this "Classis" with

## RAVENNA

its towers and ships, shaping the Magi and adding one virgin after another till the whole tale of twenty-two stood processional and complete, facing the saints and patriarchs of the other side. He was a real artist, this Greek, for he was of a real art epoch. When he worked upon the friezes, somewhere about the year 560, the founder of the church, Theodoric, had been long laid away under the giant monolith which covers his tomb, and his land had passed into the hand of the Byzantine Justinian, in whose city of Constantinople a true art-growth was stirring. There, in the new capital of the world, ideas as new as the city were springing up, and the nation was in that state of agitation and ferment at all times productive of great results for good or evil.

A double evolution was being accomplished. From the theological counter-currents, the ideas of bishops, — Greek, Latin, and African, — the evolution of dogma; from the art experience of East and West; — the arcades of Spalato and of Syria and the color-feeling of the oriental, — the evolution of a new architecture. The Greek had become master again in art. For five hundred years he had served the Roman, and now, in throwing away his livery of service, he threw away, too, all that false ornament which the Roman had borrowed from him and falsified in the borrowing. The Greek was master



## ITALIAN CITIES

once more, and he determined that his architectural ornament should be what it had always been in his time of freedom, structural. Not that he meant to raise temples and propylæa; he served a new god, and the new service had new needs, for which the vault of the Roman was admirably fitting. The arch, therefore, he kept, and made the ruling principle. But the heavy cornices, which once under a roof protected nothing from a rain which did not fall; the super-imposed orders, with their pediments and colonnettes, stuck unmeaningly upon structural masonry, — he rejected unhesitatingly, substituting surfaces with but slight projections, lightly though richly carved, where the columns were true weight-bearers, and there were no useless members. In color, too, he was an innovator.

The ancient Greek, simple in his taste and restricted by comparative poverty, used delicately painted stuccoes upon his buildings. The wealthy Roman, quarrying from the whole known world, replaced them with costly marbles, which he collected from the ends of the earth. The polished columns and incrustated slabs would admit of no less lustrous fellowship in decoration; by the side of their splendid depth of tone, stucco and painting in fresco looked poor and cheap. It was necessary to find a wall-covering equally rich and brilliant, in which the figures of saints, angels, and emperors,

## RAVENNA

and the compositions from Bible history could be represented. The chemistry of the earth had given the marbles, with their endless variety. The Greek set to work the chemistry of the laboratory. With antimony, copper, tin, etc., he made slabs of glass almost as various as the marbles; then cutting them into little cubes, he produced with them the richest artificial color in the world.

Our Greek artist had thus risen superior to the decadent citizens about him; perhaps he had stood in the crowd at the completion of St. Sophia, and had heard Justinian exclaim, "Solomon, I have outdone thee." Indeed, in that great church, with its wide reposeful curves and spaces, its cupola, its simple round arches springing directly from the capitals, its long rows of polished columns, he had given the typical example of an architecture which was to deeply influence the most solemn church interior in Italy, that of St. Mark's of Venice, and to impress the German feeling so strongly as to give its own name of Byzantine to many a Rhenish church for many a century to come. So it is not enough to accredit Justinian with his great code and pandects, or even with the exploits of those practically pious, smuggler-missionaries, the good old gentlemen who came journeying home from the far East with silk-worms packed in their walking-sticks. Besides the lawyer and manufacturer, we

## ITALIAN CITIES

recognize in him the art patron of the black-browed, close-curled artisan who stood upon the scaffold of this church,—the patron of him and of his many-sided brethren who busied themselves in the provision of art for all men, making costumes, Christian in their swathing of the body from head to foot, Greek in the transparency of their many-wrinkled tissue; making sculpture, which western monks borrowed long after they had become architects and builders for themselves; providing eight centuries of Madonnas painted by receipt till Giotto tore up the prescription and made one for himself. Ravenna's was an age of decadence, the end of the Roman empire; but it was also an age of beginnings of art propaganda, and the Greek artisan was the first of a series of proselytizers extending to Manuel Chrysoloras in the fifteenth century.

San Vitale, founded 526, consecrated in 547, and supposed to be a derivation from the golden Temple of Antioch, built by Constantine, is a typically Byzantine building and the antecedent of the church which Charlemagne raised at Aix-la-Chapelle. To the architect as builder it is interesting as the first western domed church, the dome raised by Greek workmen long after Italy had forgotten the cunning which curved the cupola of the Pantheon and vaulted the baths of Caracalla. To the architect as decorative artist, and to all men, it

## RAVENNA

is beautiful by reason of the wonderful mosaics which cover its choir from arch to pavement.

It is hard to say enough of their unique color, which is not silvery and gray, like that of modern schools of painting; not tender like the Umbrian, or warm and golden like that of the great Venetians, but deep, glowing, and solemn, like the tone of a bell or the thunder of an organ. There are the gold of Byzantium, the purple of Cæsar, the blues and greens of the chariot factions. The walls glisten with a sheen like that on a dove's neck, or the wings of a moth butterfly; with tawny red like the rind of a pomegranate; the blue of the Persian turquoise melting imperceptibly into green, and orange glowing into red or darkening into purple. Even the delicate columns, coiffed with strange capitals, are more like Indian ivory than marble. To call it all an Aladdin's cave would be to suggest the hard glitter of gems, this is rather a soft and solemn splendor. Still the place shines with gold, and may have suggested jewels to the imaginations of northern conquerors. The Norseman of Cæsar's Varangian Guard, as he looked into the royal mausoleum in the old times, when against the deep-toned mosaic Placidia's sarcophagus still glittered with its covering of silver plates, may well have thought that here indeed was the "dwarfs' work," here the "dragon's treasure," here the

## ITALIAN CITIES

gnomes' cavern of Scandinavian tradition, and the crusading minnesinger may have echoed in his song of the Venusberg his memories of the rich vaulting of St. Vitalius. In the discreet and skilful use of gold and in the toning of large masses, these early mosaics far surpass those of St. Mark's at Venice. Among the latter, many of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries make spots upon their vast gold backgrounds, while even the earlier ones lack the dignity of the examples at Ravenna. Gold predominates there also, but in smaller masses than at Venice; next comes dark blue; then a green, neither warm nor cold, graduated with a yellower green; a very beautiful creamy white; dull red and a fine purplish brown follow in lesser quantities.

The curious blunting of all angles by the little cubes, and the consequent lines of reflected light emphasizing the architecture, is a not altogether pleasing, but noticeable and essential effect in mosaic work. It is not too much to say that no decorative wall-covering can equal mosaic. In the first place, it is practically imperishable; Michelangelo affirmed that oil-painting was for women, and only fresco for men; but his master, Ghirlandajo, said well that mosaic was the true painting for eternity.

The frescoed people of Lippi and Gozzoli flake

## RAVENNA

and drop from the walls; the panels of the *cinquecento* crack, and the tempera breaks away; the canvases of Giorgione and Tintoretto blacken and moulder; but Justinian and Theodora, upon the choir of San Vitale, shine as brightly as if Belisarius were still afield and Varangers yet in harness guarding the palace of Constantinople.

If you go up into the galleries you will find the cubes not a whit less fresh than those you buy now at Murano. Again, this glass paste, opaque, semi-opaque, and transparent, is equalled in depth and richness by nothing except the finest stained glass. Lastly, in their bed of cement, made with powdered travertine and linseed oil, the little cubes cannot be laid so that their faces shall be upon a perfectly level plane; the result is the varied tonality produced by a thousand different degrees of reflection, giving an indescribable richness of surface; while the actual gradations are remarkable, masses which from below seem smooth spots of color proving to be exquisite modulations running through twenty or more shades of green, or blue, or brown. During our last visit to Ravenna we were fortunate enough to climb to the very dome of the Baptistery, where workmen were putting supporting-irons into loosened portions of the mosaic. Seen close at hand, these mosaics were remarkable in their freedom of treatment. The color was used almost as in a huge sketch painted with a

## ITALIAN CITIES

full brush, and was, in the flesh tones, suggestive of the best Pompeian fresco-work. In the great pictures of Theodora and Justinian at San Vitale, which we also examined on a scaffolding, and which are a century later, the handling is more *serré*, the colors deeper and more solemn, but less atmospheric.

The main body of San Vitale has been restored in the true spirit of seventeenth-century bungling, and the painted rose garlands of the dome, a proof of how far human beings can be unperceiving of the fitting, moulder away in the dampness from the water which now and then rises stealthily upon the flooring of the church, as if it would reflect in homage the columns which, with their anchor-carved capitals, are spoils from some antique temple of Neptune, — foul water, however, and befitting the stricken fortunes of the god. But the choir is splendid from top to pavement, not an inch is uncovered. With the instinct of true artists, who knew that in mosaic-work it was all or nothing, and that no ordinary pigment could stand beside it, they have clothed the whole in a glittering jewelled mail, flowing over every jut and angle, the soft color of which, is yet an impenetrable armor, hard enough to utterly resist the tooth of time, which has so gnawed the other portions of the church. On either side of the high altar the reflected gold of the vestments and groundwork glows dully like smouldering embers; indeed, it is the final

## RAVENNA

smouldering of antique art from which a brand shall be snatched for the rekindling. But this glorious color ends by going to the head, like strong wine, and provoking all sorts of impossible analogies.



#### IV

AFTER such an orgy of visual pleasure, one longs for the blue of the sky and the green of the meadows. Outside Ravenna, dikes stretch their long brown lines between fat rice-fields where the descendants of Sidonius's frogs croak in Aristophanic chorus in the stagnant water. In spring these pestilential marshes are transformed into fields of fairylike blossoms. Nature, in emulous imitation of art, annually reproduces the color scheme of the Byzantines in the blue of the waters and in the tender green of the young blades of rice; while tamarisks, lilies, orchids, blossoming flags and rushes, suggest the more vivid hues of the mosaics. Every foot of this treacherous soil contains a buried treasure, flotsam and jetsam of the wreck of the antique world, but the dragon that guards them is not the brown serpent that you see all too often winding in and out among the delicately brilliant flowers, but the fever which stalks perennially over the vast fen.

Here and there islands rise out of the morass. Santa Maria in Porto fuori raises its tower, once a lighthouse to the Roman fleets, still a Christopher to the devout peasant. A cross placed on a marble

## RAVENNA

pillar shows the site of the basilica of San Lorenzo in Cæsarea. Finally, three miles of the old Flaminian Way bring us to a great lonely church, "bearing its huge, long back along the low horizon like some monster antediluvian saurian, the fit denizen of this marsh world." This is the basilica of San Apollinare in Classe, the last building of the great age of Ravenna and sole vestige of the town of Classis. Less well preserved than its namesake of the city, it is, since the destruction of San Paolo fuori le Mura, the best example of the manner in which rows of symbolical figures and pictures in mosaic were employed in the decoration of church interiors. Here is a complete collection of the symbols of Christian art, — "the whole sacred menagerie;" and every emblem, from the simple monogram to the figure of the Fisherman, may be found by the student of Christian archæology.

The walls, ravaged by that enemy of Mother Church, Sigismondo Malatesta, have been conscientiously restored, but the mosaics of the apsis are ancient, and in them as on a gorgeously illuminated page we may read the glorification of the church of Ravenna, — that church which, sustained by Byzantium, claimed an equality with Rome and tried to place its patron, Saint Apollinaris, on a spiritual level with Saint Peter. Of the fruitlessness of this attempt, the utterly desolate basilica, cold with the chill

## ITALIAN CITIES

of twelve hundred winters, is an eloquent witness. The portraits of the one hundred and thirty archbishops of Ravenna, a ghostly synod, still throning it over dead Christian quarrels, look down upon the poisonous water which in spring invades the nave and with the scummy surface of its gilded pools appears to mock the color of the mosaics. The latter, important as they are to the student of church history, are artistically an anticlimax to one who comes to them from the nobler and more richly colored mosaics of San Vitale, and it is hardly worth while to dilute the strength of the impression made by the earlier and finer work. As the shadows climb the still ruddy tower, an earthy chill fills the air, the huge, deserted church begins to cover its rough façade of brickwork with a clinging cobweb-like robe of fever mist, and we hurry away to the Pinetum.

After the Byzantine church-builders, seven centuries of oblivion followed for Ravenna, when the greatest name of the Italian middle ages, that of Dante, illustrated her again. He died here in exile, and the Piazza of San Francesco, where he lies buried, epitomizes Ravenna, — Greek, mediæval, and republican. There, in the pleasant sunlight under the Gothic arches, are the sarcophagi of early Christians, dispossessed now and tenanted by Ravennese lords of the middle ages; opposite is the

## RAVENNA

accredited house of Francesca da Rimini; Lord Byron's window is just beyond; at one's right is the tomb of Dante; and at one's left, loaded with wreaths, a memorial tablet to Mazzini; the "Divine Comedy," "Childe Harold," and the epopæa of modern Italian independence! Could one ask for richer suggestiveness of art and history? It is, indeed, almost too rich and too complex. Here in Italy, where the civilizations overlies one another, and where history is piled strata upon strata, we are perforce obliged to limit our impressions. In this land which has been so much lived in, where there has been so much doing and undoing, so over-much hating and loving, memories are importunate and spirits defy exorcism. On every hand the illustrious or romantic past crowds in upon the mind. The Greek jostles the Etruscan; the Mediæval treads on the heels of the Roman; Goth and Lombard trample down the Byzantine; the Mediæval burgher is hard pushed by the man of the Renaissance, and the Garibaldino elbows the soldier of the French Republic. Each small city in the long list of Italian towns is in one sense a microcosm of the history of Italy. An arbitrary election of certain aspects of such a city for contemplation is almost involuntary, and becomes our only defence against an overwhelming host of recollections and associations.

## ITALIAN CITIES.

The art-lover, however, finds his field of contemplation much more restricted. Dealing with what actually exists, not what has been, with only the tangible vestiges of the past, his limitations of vision and suggestion are instinctive rather than voluntary. To him Ravenna is a reflection of Byzantium, and evokes a clear, sharply defined image. But to the student of events or manners or modes of thought how much Ravenna stands for! to him the epoch of Byzantine rule is but one of the pages in her civic annals. The mere name of the city fills his mind with long lines of figures which file through the mean streets of the decaying town like the mummers in a Renaissance "progress." Theodoric, Boëthius, Amalasuntha; traits in the Northern Italians of to-day which bear witness to the enduring character of the Gothic conquest; axioms from the "Consolations," the chariot roll of Gibbon's periods, — are suggested by a fragment of wall or by the tomb of the Ostrogoth, with its strange dome like a gigantic wassail cup turned upside down. French and Italian soldiers in serried charge or orderly retreat; Spanish veterans; Bayard and the "Loyal Serviteur;" the young general who lies in effigy at Milan,— whirl past the banks of the Ronco summoned by a glimpse of the besmirched *Colonna dei Francesi*. The decaying palace wall of the Polentani conjures up the little shade of the child

## RAVENNA

Francesca before "*Amor, ch'a cor gentil ratto s'apprende*," led her to Paolo and death. The Italians, who of all men love a lover best, will point you out her image on the frescoed wall of Santa Maria in Porto, where a slender Salome, arbitrarily christened Francesca, receives the adoring homage of the youth of Ravenna, which youth, being ardent, romantic, and unoccupied, cultivates the emotions. To a less sentimental spectator these battered frescoes may serve to raise a sturdy, cheerful, Tuscan ghost, for here Tradition will have it, though Research gives her the lie, Giotto painted and chatted with his exiled friend, the poet whom Ravennese good-wives declared had descended into hell, bringing back its gloom on his stern face.

The Pinetum is an enchanted wood for the lover of letters. To him the giant pines will sing the praises of Dante, and he will find their solemn aisles a fitter memorial to "*il Divino*" than the prim cupola which rises over his bones. Shades of Boccaccio and Byron and Alfieri people the forest glades, and the tortured wraith of the once cruel lady who in defiance of the mediæval law, "*Amor a nullo amato amar perdona*," dared "to fly from a true lover."

The Guiccioli palace suggests a comparison to the Italy of Dante and the Malatesta, and the Italy of opera and *cicisbei*, but they are hardly farther asunder than are the two heroines for

## ITALIAN CITIES

whom liberal-minded Ravenna has named her squares of Bice Portinari and Anita Garibaldi. The Pinetum is hallowed not only by the radiant apparition of Beatrice, "vested in colors of the living flame," but by the grave of Anita. Here, literally hunted to death, Garibaldi's heroic wife died of exhaustion while flying with her husband from the Austrian soldiery, and not the least tragic of the city's memories is the poignant story of that breathless chase.

The modern Ravennese, oppressed perhaps by their mighty heritage, turn from an aristocratic and feudal past to vote for Cipriani, a candidate who was sent to the galleys for his political opinions. *Sono un popolo cattivo*, a conservative Italian acquaintance assured us, which we translated Radical Republican, after reading the election posters. It is a not uncommon evolution, this of Ravenna *l'Antica*, from Caesarism to Populism, especially in Italy, where scarcity and excessive taxation stimulate hostile criticism of existing forms of government.

In spite, however, of the veneer of more recent epochs, of literary associations and of mediæval episodes, Ravenna will remain the typical Byzantine town, and her abiding attraction will always be her churches, which, like the agate and onyx of the desert, rough-crusted and ugly without, are within all glorious.

SIENA





# SIENA

## I

SIENA, like a true daughter of Rome, is throned superbly upon many hills, but the wolf and the twins watch over a mediæval city, and the ancient *Colonia Julia Senensis* holds higher than any other Italian town, save Florence, the double symbol of church and state in the middle ages, the tower of the cathedral and of the public palace.

We have seen the city in many phases: under black clouds, with the hailstones shining in stormy struggling sunlight against the sculptures of *Fonte Gaia* and the rain-streamlets rushing down its steep streets, and we have seen it set like a town in a missal-border against a still, flat, blue background of sky; we have seen it from the terraces of the *Osservanza* rising above its walls, which overhung the intermediate valley, and from distant, southern *Monte Oliveto*, its towers of the *Mangia* and the Cathedral dwindled to mere pin-points. We have strolled through its narrow streets at all times and all seasons; have blinked at the dazzling façade of the *Duomo* in the glare of noon, and lingered in

## ITALIAN CITIES

the great Campo when it lay white and still in the chill moonlight. We have watched the gray, bleak hills on which the town is pedestalled turn to freshest, tenderest green; we have climbed the slopes of the olive orchards and looked through scurrying snowflakes at the ramparts rising above us, and from every point, from without her gates and within her walls, from the towers above and the valley below, Siena makes one impression only upon us: Etruscan town, Roman colony as she was, the middle ages set their seal upon her, and she is the typical Gothic city of Tuscany, almost of Italy.

Verona is Siena's only rival; but Verona is rosy and smiling, Siena is brown and truculent. She has clutched sword and shield so tightly that she can never quite lose the cramped look of the defensive attitude; unlike Florence, she has not unclasped her knightly girdle of battlements, and the gates with port and ante-port complete are far finer than those by the Arno; the Romana and the Pispini look to this day as if Monluc were still defending within and Duke Cosimo besieging without.

Gothic, Siena was, not only in her outward appearance, but in her spirit, in her ideals, and in her art; Gothic in her triple aspect of warrior, saint, and sybarite. She fought with spiritual arms as well as with actual weapons; she wore the cowl

## SIENA

over the helmet, and the hand which held the sword had grasped the scourge. She was not truculent only; under the steel hauberk was the embroidered surcoat of knight and minstrel, and under the nun's rough hair-cloth the mystic ecstasy of Saint Catherine. The *Civitas Virginis* was also the *Molles Senæ* of Beccadelli's poem, the city of soft delights, of the pleasure-seekers of Folgore's sonnets, of the rakes and bruisers of Sermini's and Fortini's tales. It was the home of the love-story (*la novella amorosa*); and it was in this stronghold of saints and popes, of pietistic painters and devout conservatives, that the latent hedonism which underlay all the apparent asceticism of mediæval thought and life took artistic form.

There is a story told by the Sienese chroniclers which seems prophetic of the city's attitude toward the Renaissance. In the early fourteenth century an antique statue of Aphrodite was found in an orchard near the town,—a relic probably of the ancient Roman burg. Enthusiasts ascribed it to Lysippos, and when the new conduits were finished and water flowed for the first time in the great square, the image was set above the fountain which was called Fonte Gaia, because of the joy the people felt at the sight of it, some said, though others affirmed that it was named to honor the goddess of love and laughter.

## ITALIAN CITIES

For fourteen years the statue stood with the water flashing at its feet, and during these years faction raged more hotly than ever before; the Campo was a field of slaughter, and the fountain ran red, as bleeding partisans crawled to its margin to drink and die. It seemed as though strife were mingled with its ripples and discord welled from its brim. It was whispered that these contentions were due to the honor paid to a heathen idol which had usurped the place of Siena's celestial suzerain, and that peace would not be restored to the city until the goddess was cast out. The mediæval citizen knew his classics well enough to remember the mischief Dame Venus had wrought in Troy-town.

The whispers became murmurs, the murmurs ominous growls; finally the Council of the Twelve decreed the removal of the statue, and in order that its maleficent powers might be utilized for Siena's welfare, it was buried with thrifty hatred *on Florentine soil*.

Thus was antiquity banished from Siena, and when all Italy welcomed the Renaissance, she shut her gates against it; her painters turned with pious horror from the study of nature and sprinkled holy water on heathen sculpture; her inspired saints looked with contempt on the wisdom of the pagan, and her fierce, luxurious nobles had no mind to

## SIENA

dim their bright hawk eyes over "brown Greek manuscripts."

It is difficult, almost impossible, to explain the unique attitude of Siena toward the new movement. Was it because in the forefront of the Renaissance marched those hated Florentines, her hereditary foes? Was it the natural conservatism of the mountaineer, or the mental immutability of the devotee, who regarded all innovations as sacrilegious? Was it the old civic jealousy taking a new form? Did Siena feel instinctively that the vertical, irregular, picturesque, Gothic architecture was more suited to a hill-town than the porticoes and pediments of the Renaissance? Had mediæval painting become so identified in men's minds with the religion it served that to abandon the one seemed like renouncing the other as well?

Perhaps all of these considerations consciously and unconsciously influenced the action of the Sienese toward the revival of culture. At first they resisted it as fiercely as they had the invading Florentine armies; and while contemporary Tuscan painters were eagerly studying nature and antiquity, they were reproducing the old, bedizened, Byzantine Madonnas. When every Italian architect elsewhere was designing cupolas and colonnades, Siena's builders still clung to the Gothic; Orvieto sent to them for master-workmen for the cathedral until

## ITALIAN CITIES

1450, and Gian Galeazzo Sforza summoned Francesco di Giorgio to compete for the façade of the great church of Milan as late as 1490.

Finally, when all Italy was permeated with the new spirit and Siena was forced to open her gates to Pinturicchio and Sodoma and Rossellino, it was too late; the creative power of the mighty impulse was exhausted, and among the great artists of the sixteenth century we do not find one Sienese. Siena had but a brief span of time in which to accustom herself to the new order of things, for in 1555 she fell, sword in hand, bravely defending her liberty. After her fall, utterly broken in spirit, she had neither the money nor the inclination to follow strange fashions, and in her many misfortunes was fortunate in this, that no tawdry and pretentious seventeenth century, no rococo and pedantic eighteenth century, marred her stern grandeur and her delicate grace.

The history of Sienese art began with the victory of Monteperto (1260) and ended in the middle of the sixteenth century with the extinction of Sienese independence (1555). It has three distinct phases of development, — Gothic, Gothic modified by foreign influence, and Renaissance art, the work of the strangers or of Sienese masters imitating the work of strangers. These different stages of growth may be studied in the Public Palace, filled with frescoes

## SIENA

where Sienese painting is most at home; in the cathedral where the mediæval artist begins to yield to external pressure, and in the private palaces and lesser churches where the Renaissance eventually triumphs over the native style. Finally, the complete evolution of local painting from the early Byzantine to the late Roman manner may be seen in the municipal picture-gallery.

The city itself is a gallery of pictures. The walls form a triangle with its base to the south, and near the centre of this triangle rises the Duomo upon the crest of the highest hill. Below it to the east is the civic heart of the city, the Campo, strangest of squares, shaped like a great oyster-shell, with the communal palace at its lower lip and holding one precious pearl, Fonte Gaia.

Between the cathedral and the town hall cluster palaces with the famous names of Nerucci, Spanocchi, Saraceni, Piccolomini, and Tolomei; while the conventual churches are, as usual, nearer the walls where the brethren might have gardens and orchards. Saints Dominic and Francis are honored mightily in Siena in huge piles to west and east of the city's centre, and a daughter of Dominic has made "the noble district of the Goose" almost as famous as the Porziuncula of the Assisan saint. The Concezione and Sant' Agostino to south and southwest are imposing masses of church and con-



## ITALIAN CITIES

vent and cloister. Peruzzi's Campanile of the Carmine and the towers of San Francesco and San Domenico are simple in line and fine in effect. The town walls, these churches and campaniles with the two focal and ever present points of the Cathedral, and the soaring Mangia tower make up the general outline of Siena.

For the detail we must climb twisting streets with clean, flat pavements and never a sidewalk, where there are no rough walls, as at Perugia, but all the masonry is neatly faced, and no sally as of German oriel or French overhanging stories, not even the protruding, grated windows of Florence, break the smoothness of the Tuscan Gothic; here the iron shuts down flatly and sternly within the shallow, pointed recess, but on every side there is a wealth of exquisitely wrought torch-and-banner-rings. The palaces of the great Ghibelline nobles cluster together around the Cathedral and the Campo; the Pecci with its lion-guarded staircase, the Buonsignori, the Salimbeni, are purely Sienese in style. The latter rises high above a valley and recalls Or San Michele in its height and squareness; the Governo and the Spanocchi, on the contrary, are purely Florentine, though here and there are details indicative of the more florid local taste. The Tolomei is the most famous of them all, not for the stately elegance of its façade, but because here, as every

## SIENA

Sienese will tell you, lived the hapless Pia. The story of this gentle victim of jealousy and malaria is told in a few lines by Dante, and every Tuscan knows the tale as well as that of Francesca da Rimini. When we returned to Florence, Checha, our maid, asked eagerly if we had seen Casa Tolomei.

The beautiful hammered iron-work, a native product, seems to combine naturally with the brick, and among the cities which possess a distinct type of domestic architecture Siena deserves a high rank. Her palaces unite the lightness of the Bolognese and something of the richness of the Venetian styles to the stern Gothic character of the Florentine; and though the magic wand of the *cinquecento* has waved over the bronze and marble which burst into acanthus flower and curling scroll-work, and Tuscan masters, in the ring of their chisels, have awakened echoes of the Via Larga and Via Strozzi, in the main lines of the façades Siena has clung to the character that marked the days of Monteperto. Excellent restoration is being done in these Sienese palaces and streets. It consists mainly in removing the panels or the bricks which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were used to hide good Gothic work. Nowhere else in Italy have we heard so much talk of restoration. Even the conservative Franciscan brother at the Osservanza and the Benedictine Padre at Monte

## ITALIAN CITIES

Oliveto shared this interest. "Those saints are well enough in Paradise, but here with this fifteenth-century architecture they are out of place," said the latter, pointing to some haloed eighteenth-century sentimentalities simpering in their rococo frames. "Ah!" sighed our driver, "if they would only take away all the ugly things stupid people have put here, *Siena sarebbe bellissima*."

Siena is *bellissima*, in spite of this occasional veneer of later times, and among her most charming features are her fountains. There is Fonte Nuova lying, a still sheet of silver, under its Gothic arches, Fonte Ovile crowned with green, and Fonte Branda, clear as crystal.

For Saint Catherine's sake, we visited Fonte Branda in the early morning, scrambling down the steep path under blossoming trees and tufted greenery until San Domenico towered just above our heads on its hill-pedestal. All about us was the pungent smell of tan, and at our hand sheep's peltries lay upon wicker ovals, for all the world as if some thirsty Roman maniple had stopped to drink at the fountain and thrown its shields upon the grass. Above, the cavalry men lounged on the parapet before the church where Benincasa's daughter saw the celestial vision; before us the washer-women pounded away at their linen; farther on, outside the gate, the city wall climbed at a

## SIENA

sharp angle to where the Cathedral rode upon the highest ridge, the campanile holding aloft above the tiles and towers the black and white of the republic's arms.

Perhaps one's most vivid impressions of Siena as a whole are these fountain-side visions of the uplifted city; to close the eyes is still to see the narrow ways climbing the slopes and piercing brown arches; the close-set houses sweeping like billows now downward, now upward, tossed here and there into higher jet of palace or church, breaking into a spray of towers, till all are crested by the foam-like sculpture of the Duomo.

And the fountains themselves, lying flat and mirror-like with still depths and glistening surface, dancing in reflection upon the brown-grained vaulting above. They are wholly different from any others, these grottoed wells of Siena, strange presences in a city, bringing within the walls the sense of caverned, mountain-springing waters. Each with its crown of verdure is an Egeria to whom the mediæval Numa might come for counsel and for peace; a Gothic Egeria under her pointed arches, for from Siena antiquity is thrust out. Here the nymph is haloed; close draped from throat to heel, she passes, and the idyl itself is fixed upon a background of gold.

If we return with the mediæval law-giver to his

## ITALIAN CITIES

palace, we shall find ourselves in the vast, curving Campo. Geologists say that Siena is built on an extinct volcano and this square occupied the place of the old crater. Any student of the city's political history will find a singular appositeness in this site, for the old fire blazed perennially in the hearts of the citizens and within the walls of the municipal palace. For here it sits in state with its graceful Mangia tower and a solemn assembly of palaces fronting it in amphitheatre. Before it once stood the monumental virtues of Jacopo della Quercia's fountain, now mere battered fragments in the Museum ; beside it soars the Mangia ; not as audacious as the bell-tower of the old palace of Florence, it is more aspirant and equally individual, with its shooting stem, its bracketed battlements, its pillar-surrounded bells and its sculptured wolves.

The little chapel before the palace, an *ex voto* of the plague of 1348, though graceful in itself, is an excrescence, and the huge building is far finer seen from the rear. From under the beamed roof and between the pillars of the market-place it looks the Gothic palace of the Chronicles ; its grating might surely imprison every possible fantasy, every nightmare horror. Here should be cobwebs, bloodstains, and *oubliettes* by day, lurking assassins and bleeding spectres by night, enacting the secret dramas of the archives and passing up and down that mouldering

## SIENA

staircase (like those we climb in dreams), which goes burrowing through the pile, now low, now aloft, now corbelled on the outside of the building, now disappearing under a dark arch to lead on to a vast loggia where a whole city council might sit *al fresco*. The façade, a monstrous mass of brick, opens a hundred Argus eyes of every size and shape, and other windows still have been blocked up; above them are strange, string-course eyebrows; there are long wrinkling cracks in the brick-work; the gratings show like clinched teeth; this grim visage of the olden time is set firmly against all the mischance of five hundred years, and frowns even under the caress of the Tuscan sunshine.

Turning from the palace, one finds oneself in the centre of a horseshoe with the piled up Carmine and Sant' Agostino on the spurs of rock which form each side of it. From one's feet the valley dips away rapidly and deeply in range behind range of low volcanic hills, till Monte Amiata pencils its snow-crested sky-line against the southern horizon. Thus sits the palace of the republic, the focal point of a double amphitheatre natural and artificial, of palaces upon one hand, of *contado* upon the other, telling to those who can hear aright the story of six hundred years and marking every hour that is added to the tale of centuries.

Within it is far more unchanged than is the

## ITALIAN CITIES

Palazzo Vecchio of Florence; there Michelozzo and Benedetto remodelled Arnolfo's hall, but Siena seems to have instinctively understood that her glories came earlier, and she clung to them. These rooms are mediæval; the original construction is hardly changed, and the prevailing impression is one of half savage, clumsy grandeur made more emphatic by the pure Gothicism of their decoration,—a Gothicism which is rather belated for the time. There is little of the thoughtful and balanced ornament of the contemporaneous chapel of the Spaniards in Florence, and little of the austere elegance of the Bargello.

During the turbulent life of the old commonwealth generation after generation of artists was called to embellish this house of the people. It was the central jewel of the city's civic crown, the theatre of her municipal dramas, the focus of her political life. As such, it was loved and respected by all the different factions which each in its turn ruled and misruled Siena. The decoration of the palace went steadily on, no matter who held the reins of government. Defeated candidates might be thrown from the windows, riot might break up the council, strife disperse the magistrates, the painters' stipends were punctually paid. Minorities flew to arms and majorities abused their victories; delation whispered in dark corners, and party hatred

## SIENA

hunted its victims through these echoing chambers ; the *frescanti* labored quietly on, celebrating the republic's triumphs, the glories of her popes, or the coronation of her heavenly sovereign, and through the dissensions which made Siena a byword for civic discord, the famous artists of the School, Martini and Lorenzetti and Quercia and Lando, left their handwriting on these walls and made of this the typical town-hall of Italy.

In the Sala del Gran Consiglio, divided nearly down the centre by a line of heavy arches, Sienese painting may be seen at its best and worst. In Simone's great lunette filled by a charming and astonishingly decorative composition there is beauty of a delicate character in the heads of the saints, and the narrow-lidded, purse-mouthed Madonna has a grace and distinction unknown to Giotto. But in Ambrogio di Lorenzo's battle of Turrina (1363), where the little jointed lay figures move across a flat, map-like background showing every hill and stream and hamlet conscientiously labelled, the painter becomes a child with a big slate, and his picture is as *naïf* and confused as a battle on an Egyptian pylon. The Renaissance, however, has passed this way and left Sodoma's Roman warrior-saints Victor and Ansanus, noble and vigorous youths, visions of antique health and beauty among these mediævals, and as unexpected



## ITALIAN CITIES

here as Scipio would have been at Monteperto. On the wall above them is a return to the Gothic art of Siena, and against a vast field a little, solitary Guidoriccio, captain of the republic, rides, like a matress on horseback, in commemoration of the siege of Montemassi (1328).

But Gothic painting can show us something finer than this. Passing through the left nave or ante-chapel, we find ourselves in the *Sala della Pace*, the Hall of Peace. In 1337 Ambrogio Lorenzetti began to work on these walls. His business was to demonstrate the principles and blessings of good government and the evils of misrule, and to express them in that figurative language which could be read by all the citizens alike, even by the peasant and the wool-carder. Lorenzetti, who was something of a philosopher, Vasari tells us, put the symbolism of his time to good use, and though to us the thread of allegory may seem too finely spun, the didactic purpose did not exclude beauty of a noble and monumental character, and the frescoes are a mural decoration as well as a painted treatise.

Among these attendant virtues of the well-governed state, each one gowned to the feet, sitting grave and stately in a solemn row like the sculptured figures on a mediæval reliquary, there is one which reclines, her wreathed head resting on her hand. Helmet and shield lie under her feet, she

## SIENA

holds the olive branch like a sceptre, and her semi-transparent robe hangs ungirdled like an antique tunic.

This is the celebrated Peace which seems to have floated hither from a Pompeian wall, a Pagan goddess, perhaps a Venus Victrix consorting with these Christian virtues. How came she here? Symonds suggests that this figure was copied from the mischief-making Aphrodite of Lysippos. Ambrogio had made a fine drawing from the statue, which Ghiberti admired many years afterward. By an irony of fate the goddess banished from the square sat in the council-chamber. And if her influence was indeed malign, if her own apple of discord had been thrown down among the magistrates, she could not have looked upon wilder deeds than those that were constantly enacted here. It was not the painter's fault. Had he not demonstrated that the commonwealth should be surrounded by all the virtues, Cardinal, Christian, Pagan; that its right should be supported by armed might; that the ruling body of twenty-four citizens should be united by concord and governed by justice? Had he not also with rare political sagacity shown the relative importance of the various virtues by the different scales adopted for their personifications, thus in civic administration faith is of small importance while justice is essential. To prevent

## ITALIAN CITIES

all possibility of mistake, their names are plainly written over all the figures, and ribbons and scrolls materially bind the elaborate allegory together, while the whole scheme with its hierarchy of municipal virtues was doubtless suggested by some erudite student of Aristotle or of Dante's *De monarchia*. The painter has also shown the practical effects of good and bad government in a spirited series of *genre* pictures, — episodes of contemporary town life which appealed directly to the spectator's memories and experience.

Truly the philosophic Ambrogio was not to blame if Siena was "*un guazzabuglio ed una confusione di repubbliche piuttosto che bene ordinata e instituta repubblica.*"

Republic, commonwealth, the names are misleading and suggest to the modern mind something akin to our own form of popular sovereignty. A nominal vassalage to a German Cæsar; a struggle for independence; a governing body or *Monte* composed of patricians; a popular revolution: a *Balia* of merchants; an uprising of the artisans; native despotism, and finally submission to a foreign tyrant, — this is a fair synopsis of the history of the Sienese republic, nay, of many Italian republics as well. "*C'est la ville qui se gouverne plus follement que toute ville d'Italie,*" wrote grave De Commynes a century and a half after Ambrogio finished his

## SIENA

fresco, and mad indeed Siena must have been to merit this distinction.

Imagine a state governed by miracles, a state which sent ecstatic nuns and socialistic painters on important embassies; where the saints themselves became politicians, and the celestial court terrorized or bribed voters by visions and prodigies; where a rain of blood or some such manifestation of divine displeasure about election time would upset the existing government and carry the entire opposition into office at one sweep; where, when the victors had murdered, confiscated, and exiled sufficiently to produce a popular reaction of feeling, a third party would appear to repeat the same blunders and excesses. Sometimes a holy personage would have a revelation, and in obedience to the divine mandate the whole city would turn out in penitential procession. Radicals and conservatives, aristocrats and artisans, their shoulders bleeding from the lash, knelt together on the cathedral pavement and swore on the great crucifix to live in peace together forever after. Eight pages of blood-curdling maledictions were then read, wherein he who should break his oath was cursed thoroughly and comprehensively (for cursing was a fine art in the middle ages with a vigorous vocabulary). Afterward the notaries of the rival factions wrote down the names of those who had sworn to main-

## ITALIAN CITIES

tain public tranquillity, and the adverse parties fell on each other's necks. But the penitential torches were hardly spent, the swords which Religion bade men leave at the church-door were scarcely sheathed, when, in spite of anathema, they were out again and all parties were fighting once more.

The acts of the popular government (*Noveschi*) were prophetic of the darkest days of the Reign of Terror in France. There were clubs like the Jacobins; secret societies; lists of the suspected; spies in the prisons and revolutionary tribunals, and yet amid all this disorder the virtues of self-sacrifice, fidelity to friends and comrades; devotion to an ideal; fortitude and courage, all these qualities that are developed by the militant attitude of the soul, flourished as they never can in an industrial republic.

## II

A FAINT echo of the old contests has lasted even to our own times, and on every fifteenth of August the Campo is again the theatre of strife. The annual horse-race, the *Palio*, is run here in honor of the city's patron, the Blessed Virgin; and Siena, who is frugal and sober enough for the rest of the year, becomes a boisterous, ruffling spendthrift during the *festa*.

This is no ordinary race, with professional jockeys, lean, glossy horses, and a quiet fashionable crowd of spectators betting in a bored and decorous way; this is a family affair of palpitating domestic interest. The cattle are the thick-necked, stout little nags that Beppo, the butcher boy, drives in his cart, and that Gigi, the green-grocer's son, rides out to the hillside farm, and the jockeys are Beppo and Gigi themselves and their ilk: the onlookers are their friends and relatives and rivals, the whole town of Siena, and every able-bodied peasant in the *contado* as well. It is only in Tuscany, where there is no "brutalized lower class," that such a work-a-day, popular affair could be a ceremony and a spectacle. Perhaps, too, the fact that the same thing had been done annually for the last

## ITALIAN CITIES

five hundred years has much to do with its picturesqueness.

These races are a contest between the seventeen different wards of Siena, a survival of the old party feuds. Each district contributes a horse and ten men dressed in mediæval costume. A few hours before the race, each horse is blessed in the parish church of the *contrada* to which it belongs.

One is rather impressed with the sporting character of the local saints; they are debonair, these celestial potentates, and sometimes even playful, so that to the modern shopkeeper it seems as natural to ask their good-will for the horse that is to run for the honor of Madonna and the district, as it was for the mediæval noble to hang the wax image of his pet hawk before their altars.

The little company which enters the church with the plunging, rearing horse looks as though it were contemporary with the hawk's master. There is the captain of the district, elderly, bearded, in full armor; the rider wearing the helmet which later he will change for a metal jockey-cap; the standard-bearers, the drummer, the dear, little solemn pages who might have come hither from some altar-piece of Botticelli or some pageant of Gozzoli. All are splendid in satin trunks, brocaded doublets, velvet mantles, and the tightest of pink fleshings, while each tiny red cap is perched on

## SIENA

a mass of fuzzy hair. The fine costumes are worn with ease and grace, though the beauty of the Italian youth is rather that of the faun than the athlete. Everybody is very much in earnest and quite lacking in the self-consciousness which would paralyze a Northerner tricked out in tights and long curls.

When the horse reaches the high altar, he is blessed and sprinkled with holy water and led away with much cheering. The church has lent its aid to help him win the banner, which, if he is successful, will hang with many others, some of them centuries old, in the sacristy. The Campo is also in gala dress. The grim palaces are all aflame with banners, shields hang from every window, and brilliant colors float from every balcony. Over the pavement a track of earth has been laid for the *Palio*, going entirely around the Piazza; barriers have been placed along the inner side of the half-circle thus formed, and on the outer edge there are tiers of seats built up against the surrounding house-walls.

Toward the *Ave Maria* every balcony, window, and bench is filled, even the roofs are crowded, and into the central space behind the barriers some twenty thousand peasants have wedged themselves, the braided gold of their huge straw hats flapping with anticipatory excitement.



## ITALIAN CITIES

The course is cleared by mounted carabinieri, and the procession begins. First in orthodox, festival fashion comes the town band in dark blue uniforms, then trumpeting loudly, nine heralds who surely must have figured at some mediæval tournament; the companies of the various districts follow, a stream of rich color against the palace walls; the standard-bearers playing graceful tricks with their flags, the captain with his escort of four pages armed with lances, the *figurino*, most gorgeous of all, carrying the ward-banner with its emblem, and lastly the *fantino* on horseback. The pageant is closed by a modern facsimile of the *Caroccio* or battle-car taken from the Florentines at Montaperto (1260), by the victorious Sienese, who in witness thereof set up its poles in their cathedral, and in many other ways keep the memory of this ancient victory green and Florence in a proper state of retrospective humiliation. Meanwhile the barebacked horses have been driven into a pen formed of ropes, and each rider has received his *nerbo* or whip made of ox-sinew, — a redoubtable weapon which he is permitted to use not only on his own horse, but on the rival jockeys and their horses as well. This brutal custom is undoubtedly a survival of earlier contests.

Finally all are mounted, a gun is fired, the rope drops: there is a rush, a many-colored flash, horses

## SIENA

and riders shoot out on the track and are off at last. One pony trips over the rope and falls like a stone with his rider, who lies motionless, while something redder than a blush streams over his cheek. "It is nothing, nothing," your neighbor on the balcony assures you; "those boys are made of india rubber; to-day they are mangled and killed, and to-morrow they will be amusing themselves."

The horses meantime are tearing around the palpitating piazza; the jockeys are flogging right and left with the cruel *nerbo*, and a wave of excitement follows them. It is a fine sight; the riders have neither saddles nor stirrups and are one with their mounts, but Sienese youth is guileless; there are no turf tricks here, no dark horses, no husbanding of speed until the decisive moment. Bear gets the lead early in the race, keeps it and wins by two lengths amid deafening cries of "*Orso, Orso!*" There is a deep growl from the conquered *contrade* and a rush for the winner, but the Italian policemen, those lions of martial aspect and fierce mustachios, those lambs of gentle courtesy and softest speech, have already closed around him. They protect him until his company rallies and escorts him in triumph to the church again, where he hangs up the prize banner.

The athlete who brought home the wild olive crown from the Olympian games, the young Roman

## ITALIAN CITIES

who hung up a trophy in the Capitol, were probably not lacking in a proper appreciation of their own merits, but their bumptiousness was as the humility of cloistered maidens, compared to the vain glory of the youth who wins the *Palio*, if one may believe the local gossips. No wonder that Bazzi, that adopted son and spoiled child of Siena, who had gained many *palii* with his Barbary horses, was prouder of his prizes than of his paintings, and "would exhibit them to every one who came to his house, nay, he would frequently make a show of them at his windows," to the astonishment and disgust of that shrewd business man and conventional bourgeois, Giorgio Vasari.

### III

MUCH prose poetry has been written about the Siennese school of painting. Years ago Rio and Lindsay struck a note which finds an echo in the appreciation of the most modern critics. The literary *boulevardier* still worships at the shrines of the "*Madones aux longs regards*," and in their presence even the stern and suspicious disciples of the "Detective school" of art criticism cease to scrutinize and become lyrical. Perhaps no "Primitive" painting has inspired so much enthusiasm in men of letters.

A study of the Siennese pictures, while it affords little to justify these eulogies, stimulates a desire to discover why this mediocre art has proved so attractive.

We suspect that the panegyrists of the Siennese masters regarded them from the æsthetic rather than the plastic point of view; that they confused the material of representation with the manner of representation, the aspect of an actual object pleasing in itself with the pictorial presentation of such an object.

There are many different degrees of visual pleasure: iridescent glass, the changing lights of jewels, masses

## ITALIAN CITIES

of gold and color, the mere splendor of gold itself, and of "pure color unspoiled by meaning," are pleasant to look upon and possess intrinsic charm and value, a charm which appeals to the savage and the child as well as to the æsthetically cultivated, and which is "unvexed by thought."

There is joy for the eye as well in beautiful objects which are more highly differentiated, wherein color is wedded to design; in glistening tissues and in dusky webs of Oriental needlework, and in intricate mazes of tooling and damascening.

But there is a still sensuous but higher delight — higher in the sense that it demands far more of the beholder as well as of the artist — in color subordinated to form and meaning. It is undeniable that a nobler quality of appreciation is required to admire Titian's *Flora* or Veronese's *Family of Darius* than to appreciate a Persian tile or an Indian carpet.

It is to the more primitive æsthetic sense that the Sienese painter appeals. He was a cunning craftsman in the use of the gilder's tools. He could chase and damascene the most labyrinthine and exquisite of patterns. He had an Oriental's feeling for textile design and a goldsmith's love of minute and elaborate ornament. His inventiveness, limited to accessories, manifested itself in his treatment of them.

The undeveloped artist unable to paint beautiful pictures loves to paint beautiful things, — things

## SIENA

beautiful in themselves, — and he offers them (quite unconsciously) as substitutes for competent painting. Madonna's face may be a flat mask, her body a *simulacrum*, but her halo and mantle-clasp modelled in plaster, gilded and stuck on to the painted panel, will be admirably designed. The painter limited in his powers of expression gathers into his picture the material which in real life pleases him and his townsfolk, substituting suggestion for plastic realization. It is indisputable that suggestion is more stimulating to the art critic than actual pictorial achievement, which, possessing the means of complete expression, stands in far less need of being helped out, interpreted, and expounded than the imperfect or undeveloped work of art which is necessarily obliged to leave much to the imagination of the spectator. In the last instance the field is open to individual interpretation and for the formulation of theories.

The inarticulate work of art appeals to the critic; he "discovers" it, pleads for it, reveals it. Indeed, he soon ceases to see it objectively, and it often appears to him only through the medium which his own fancy has created. Why has so much been written about Botticelli and so little about Donatello? Why is Simone Martini more stimulating to eloquence than Veronese? Because Donatello and Veronese deliver their own message, while Botticelli and Mar-

## ITALIAN CITIES

tini are tentatively struggling for expression. The master-craftsmen need no apologists, and offer no handle to facile criticism. The impotent or imperfect Sieneſe painters, on the contrary, afford unlimited opportunity for the onlooker to do a little painting on his own account by the exercise of his own fancy.

The amateur is also apt to mistake rudimentary presentation of pictorial material for the voluntary simplification of such material. The eminently competent selection of the essential and the elimination of the non-essential is not easily distinguished by the untrained in such matters from the incompleteness which is the result of incompetence. Fourteenth-century "simplicity" is not the same thing as sixteenth-century generalization. The Sieneſe triptychs have a specious air of intentional limitation; their gorgeousness in color and ornament, their undeniable decorativeness, have been accepted as decoration, which is a very different thing. Their shortcomings, lack of solidity and of construction, to the eye of the practitioners, are those to which the man of letters was most indulgent in the days when "expression" and "feeling" were sought rather than values and "envelopement."

Perhaps it is also because this Sieneſe painting affords a tempting opportunity for the establishment of a rival cultus to that of the positive and realistic

## SIENA

Florentines. There are Aristideses in art and literature, and some critics weary of hearing Giotto called "the Just."

Finally, to analyze or define the enduring charm of a world-famous picture is a form of mental exercise; to rhapsodize over a Sano di Pietro or a Matteo di Giovanni, to ascribe spiritual significance and mystic meaning to works which are pictorially insignificant, is an inexpensive form of mental dissipation.

There is, on the other hand, no doubt that Siena produced great artists. But she possessed no great school, and the individuality which manifested itself so turbulently in municipal and domestic life ceased to express itself, with the notable exception of Jacopo della Quercia, in the fine arts at an early period of their development. The hand of tradition lay too heavily on her painters, and the history of Sienese painting may be written in three words: Duccio, Martini, Lorenzetti.

Thanks to the labors of Milanesi in the storehouse of Sienese archives, wherein are preserved all the contracts made by the republic since the twelfth century, we can calculate to a *soldo* what Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti were paid for their work, and lynx-eyed modern criticism has discovered that frescoes long ascribed to them were done by other hands; but of the personality of Simone, Petrarch's friend and painter of Madonna



## ITALIAN CITIES

Laura; of the character of Lorenzetti, whom Vasari records as leading the life of a gentleman and a philosopher rather than that of an artist; of the life of Duccio da Buoninsegna, the first master to show "feeling" and "expression" in his heads,— we know little save their names and their work.

But their work remains to praise them. Duccio's altar-piece, hidden for many years in a closet in the Opera del Duomo, is now placed where it can be seen and studied. Does it justify the opinion of those who consider Duccio a rival of Giotto, or has the Florentine still the cry? Take the best known of Duccio's compositions which through photography and engraving have become familiar to us: the Three Marias at the Tomb or the Betrayal of Christ, and place them beside Giotto's Death of Saint Francis or the Banquet of Herod.

The two masters are absolutely different in character. Duccio derives directly from the Byzantines. One would not be surprised to find his figures in a manuscript of the time of Alexander Severus by some illuminator who, though not as skilful as those iconographic sculptors who filled out the series of imperial busts, was nevertheless full of feeling for subtle beauty and graceful movement. Giotto is a pioneer, an innovator. In his paintings the mediæval Italian enters art as a pictured presence, not as the *larva* of the missal, but the real, living man

## SIENA

of the *Novelle* of Sacchetti. Imagine a Ravennese mosaic freed from its rigidity and made supple, the color somewhat blackened, the faces human and pleasing, and you have Duccio's figures. His art was born in the catacombs and bred at Mont Athos. Giotto's is a robust son of the people and of the busy battle-filled fourteenth century. Duccio lingers in the court of the Byzantine palace, but Giotto shoulders aside the gilded prætorian at its gate and goes out into the fields. Duccio is the descendant of the gentleman of the old Empire, with his refinement and his limitations. Giotto is the mediæval peasant, with all the peasant's vigor and capacity for continued effort. In some respects, Duccio surpasses Giotto, notably in subtlety of feeling for beauty in his heads and in a certain delicacy of sentiment, but Giotto is immeasurably Duccio's superior in inventiveness, in dramatic feeling, in composition, and, above all, in solidity. Duccio, for all his power and science, is still Byzantine. Taken altogether, Duccio is as distinctly a phenomenon as Giotto, but he is a phenomenon which closes an era, a sudden flash of flame springing high above the environment of all his fellows, but going out into darkness, whereas Giotto's is a steadily waxing light, the harbinger of the morning, indeed the day itself come to irradiate Italy and the world.

This cumulation which counts Giotto as an initial

## ITALIAN CITIES

force is so impressive to the student of art history that he is apt to slight Duccio as a phenomenon, but a little thought and study soon cause him to be regarded as almost as puzzling a survival as Giotto is a surprising precursor. Giotto, deriving from Giovanni Pisano, and from every other sound and progressive artistic influence of his time, is far more important than Duccio, but hardly more astonishing. If Giotto by strength, solidity, simplicity of feeling, clearness of vision, overtops his fellow painters and translates the vigor and dignity of Giovanni Pisano's marbles on the flat surface of wall or panel into a far freer and nobler composition, Duccio too has so bettered all his instructors that he in turn seems phenomenal.

Every great artist is more or less of a Janus, looking backward to his master and his master's master, and forward to a future of personal progress. Duccio looks only backward, but how far he looks, how clearly he sees, and beside him what blind bunglers are the monk-bred painters, his contemporaries, when they strive to learn from Byzantine illumination, mosaic, or ivory carvings! Much has been written, and well written, about Duccio's feeling for expression, for pathos, for poignant presentation of heart-stirring scenes; what is even more worthy of note is a technical knowledge and capacity which (always relatively considered) are amazing. Look at the

## SIENA

delicate feet and hands of his apostles; study their faces, which are not only differentiated but individualized, and sometimes almost skilful in drawing. Their painter saw over the heads of his contemporaries far back into the times of those great forefathers of whom he is the unique descendant; it is as though Duccio turned monkish Latin into the language of Claudian.

In elegance, grace, subtlety of feature, slenderness of proportion, Duccio excels; in vitality, in freedom of thought, as well as in robust solidity and noble simplicity of composition, Giotto leaves him hopelessly behind, for if Duccio is the final efflorescence of the old, Giotto is the blossom of the new art.

Petrarch, the first of the literary admirers of the Sienese school, wrote in a friendly rather than a judicial spirit the oft-quoted lines: "I have known two excellent artists, Giotto of Florence and Simone of Siena," for the latter with all his exquisite craftsmanship, his feeling for grace and sweetness and splendor, is by no means the equal of the great Florentine. These two painters represent the male and female principle in the art of the fourteenth century: Giotto robust, dramatic, daring; Simone delicate, conservative, poetic. Both of them are intensely sincere; both, if judged superficially, very similar, because controlled by the conventionalities

## ITALIAN CITIES

of the *trecento*. But compare one of the great frescoes of Giotto in the lower church of Assisi, or the Arena Chapel at Padua, with the lunette of Simone which fills one end of the main hall in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena. Giotto, like a *trecento* Raphael or Michelangelo, has thrown aside all superfluous ornament; Simone's fresco, on the other hand, is an expanded miniature, yet it is grand and lovely at once, and a very ideal decoration, intensely decorative to its every detail.

X But how inferior to Giotto in simplicity and directness of composition are the frescoes in the church of St. Francis at Assisi, and how much more out of drawing than the least skilful of the Tuscan master's are the half length figures in the same church, delicate, thoughtful, and beautifully rich in color as they are! Yet in spite of his limitations, Simone is the worthy Sienese counterpart of the Florentine, standing to him in the fourteenth century in something the same relation that Botticelli bears to Ghirlandajo a hundred years later, with this difference — their positions are reversed, Giotto is greater than Martini, Botticelli greater than Ghirlandajo, or at any rate more individual.

The portrait of Laura which, if we may believe Vasari, Simone painted for Petrarch while he was in Avignon has disappeared. More by far than its original charm has come down to us in the two

## SIENA

sonnets which the grateful lover addressed to the artist. In Simone's time, portraiture, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist; the epoch of the portrait in the evolution of Italian art had not yet come, nor did it arrive until a century later. The authentic so-called portraits of the fourteenth century have little more than an archæological value. The painter might reproduce such obvious peculiarities as the cut of the hair and beard, the dress and headgear; these pictures are valuable to the student of costume and of general types, and are indispensable to the archæologist in all matters of identification and date; but the artist had not arrived at a point where he was able to individualize and characterize the features sufficiently to give a portrait any artistic or historical value. Simone was undoubtedly able to paint a head for Petrarch which represented the type of woman to which Laura belonged. Her blue eyes and her golden hair, her green velvet gown and the general aspect of a handsome gentlewoman of the fourteenth century, it was in the painter's power to render. But the picture not only satisfied but delighted Petrarch, and lovers are close observers of the face that is dearest to them and stern critics of attempts to reproduce its charm. Would Laura's poet, he who had lingered so lovingly on every detail of her "*divina sembianza*," have been transported by a mere general presentation, a kind of "ideal" head of

## ITALIAN CITIES

the pretty woman of the epoch ? To this objection we may answer that Petrarch's opportunities of seeing his adored lady had been comparatively few ; that Laura's image had become generalized in Petrarch's mind, and that he saw the actual woman through a kind of luminous mist created by his own unfulfilled desire, and by the spiritual aspirations which he had gradually habituated himself to associate with the thought of her. When we remember also that men seldom see in things plastic more than what they are taught to see, and that realism in art was as yet unknown, it is not so difficult to understand Petrarch's enthusiasm over Simone's picture.

Simone, as is natural enough in a pupil of Duccio, holds fast to the gold and purple of imperial tradition ; he is under the shadow of the sceptre of Byzantium, and cannot win free. The spell of the effete, luxurious old civilization is on him. M. Lafenestre calls him "an exquisite, delighting in jewels of price and embroidered stuffs, an archæologist borrowing liberally from antique costumes and accessories ;" he manipulates this elegant detail easily and gracefully ; to the taste for magnificence which he shares with all the artists of the Sienese school, he adds poetic feeling, and no painter of his day has rendered so winsomely the type which for a thousand years had incarnated man's desire for beauty.

## SIENA

His long-eyed, full-lipped Madonnas, jewelled like reliquaries, are gentler and sweeter sisters of the Empress Theodora. His narrow-lidded, aquiline profiles, anatomically absurd as they are, are potent to suggest beauty, and the puissance of such suggestion is not counteracted in the layman by the knowledge of the construction which Simone lacks.

Delicate, subtile profiles of Egyptian goddesses cut in lowest relief on dusky temple walls; Javanese dancers glancing sidewise under long eyelids tinged with kohl; slender, languid Coptic girls praying in the churches of Fostat,—such are the memories evoked by Simone's frescoes at Assisi and his "Majesty" in Siena. Indefinable yet penetrating is the Oriental influence, subtle as the scent of jasmine or sandal-wood which clings to the webs of Eastern looms.

Yet Simone is the child of the middle ages as well as the heir of Byzantium. They have dowered him with tenderness and sweetness, and he paints his Madonna "with a difference." His frescoes of the legend of Saint Martin might serve as illustrations (in the noblest sense) to some mediæval romance of chivalry, and his "Arming of the Knight" was painted with Folgore da Gimignano's sonnets under his eyes. The figures of his virgins and saints are visible signs of the changes that chivalry and Christianity had effected in the Byzantine ideal of femi-



## ITALIAN CITIES

nine beauty. It was not enough that Madonna should be stately, she must be compassionate as well; antique serenity was softened into gentleness, the physical perfection of Blessed Virgins and the holy women should not only fill the eye, it must *intenerisce il cuore*. Sentiment, *gentilezza di cuore*, expression and mannered grace was what an emotional, fervent society wanted, and what Simone could express by delicate modifications and individual treatment of the old conventions. He bent the proudly erect head of the Byzantine Madonna, and turned it slightly sideways, and he elongated the face, giving it a more delicate oval. He lengthened and slightly raised the lower eyelids, thus lending to the eyes themselves the soft languish that the Greek sculptors never failed to give to the statues of Aphrodite. Thus was the dignified, Pagan patrician of the Ravennese mosaics transformed into the pensive, yearning, and, it must be confessed, sometimes petulant Madonna of the triptychs. It is a far cry from Queen Dido to Queen Iseult of Ireland, from Cornelia to Griselda; but it is hardly longer than from Our Lady of San Apollinare in Ravenna to Our Lady of the Palazzo Pubblico.

The third artist of the trio, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, is the most robust of the early Sienese masters. He is almost massive in his great decoration of the Municipal town hall, "Good and Bad Government,"

## SIENA

though on the same wall he proves, if not the flexibility of his genius, at least the catholicity of his taste in his readiness to look with as favoring eyes as Niccolò Pisano's own upon the antique, and to paint a Pax which reclines with as much freedom of movement as the Hera-Madonna on the Pisan pulpit.

In this vast composition there is nothing of the suavity and languid grace of Martini. Simone spangles his fresco with shining ornament till his saints seem so many mediæval Buckinghamshaking jewels from their garments. Lorenzo's frescoed folk are soberly, even severely suited; but Ambrogio, like Simone, is a poet, though he speaks more gravely, and he is a scholar, too, whose classical references make Simone's archæological paraphernalia seem almost coquettish. Ambrogio is sturdily simple where Simone is *précieux*, and robust where Simone is delicate, or even slightly affected.

In considerations of this kind, we must constantly bear in mind that these painters are primitive masters; that many of their qualities must be considered as purely relative; that correct drawing was to them an unknown quantity; that skilful modelling was as yet unattainable, and that they ignored anatomy, and were innocent of any knowledge of perspective. The portrait also did not exist in the *trecento* (despite the assertions of those eager friars whose proprietary in-

## ITALIAN CITIES

terest prompts them to find Laura and Petrarch, Dante and the Duke of Athens, *ritratti autentissimi*, on their church walls).

Yet it must be conceded that Lorenzetti, like Duccio and Martini, possessed qualities that were as positive as possible: virility, simplicity, dignity; his decoration in the Palazzo Pubblico, in which ethical significance is united to feeling for monumental mass and line and sensitiveness to human beauty, is the most impressive production of any native Sienese painter. The character of Lorenzetti's genius is well defined by the terms Antoninus employed in the description of his ideal being: "masculine, adult, political, a ruler and a servant of the gods."

## IV

THE triad of masters left no successors, and for more than a hundred years Sienese painting remained stationary. The condition of arrested development into which the Giotteschi sunk after the death of Giotto bade fair to become perennial in Siena.

The energy of her painters was diverted into other avenues. They became active politicians, sometimes party leaders, and their lives were as dramatic as their works were contemplative. A political career then exacted considerable expenditure of vital force, and but little remained for the pursuit of new methods in painting. Swaggering individualism is a very different thing from personality, and it is not surprising that the political activity and the revolutionary ardor of the painter-demagogues were only equalled by the intensity of their artistic conservatism. They are unique figures in the history of art and manners, and deserve a brief notice in any study of Siena.

Apparently it was not until after the great plague had levelled all ranks (1348), and the rise of the popular party, that the painters dropped the brush for the sword, and began to march under the banners

## ITALIAN CITIES

they had painted. Sons of the people, members of one of the lesser crafts, they were naturally factors in the political revolutions of 1368 and 1483, and were not only democrats but demagogues. Documents show us a certain type of populist painter directing public affairs, age after age, like that Andrea Vanni who was a correspondent of Saint Catherine. He expelled the nobles in 1368, was ambassador to the Florentines and to the Pope, became architect of the duomo and Captain of the People; at the same time he followed his profession, painting the gonfalon of liberty for the Republic and the portrait of Saint Catherine now in San Domenico, setting the blazon of the Duke of Milan on the public palace, and filling orders for altar-pieces.

The Demos in Siena was a good art patron to the artist-partisans and a cruel master to a political opponent, as Jacopo della Quercia found to his cost. The government had plenty of commissions to bestow, and we find a political agitator like Benvenuto di Giovanni illuminating the choir-books of the cathedral and decorating the cupola; a practical politician, Giovanni Cini, painted the standard of Liberty, and forty years later, still in favor, restored his own work, which had been roughly handled. After the victory of Camollia, where he had fought as flag-bearer of his quarter, he was chosen to paint the votive picture which commemorated the triumph

## SIENA

of the Republic. It would be tedious to multiply examples: all through the history of Siena the artist is prominent as magistrate, innovator, soldier, often as conspirator. Even in the sixteenth century, when the older type of the citizen-painter was elsewhere supplanted by the court-painter, the Sienese still remained the turbulent burgher.

The biography of Pacchiarotto, one of the last of the native artists, reads like a romance of the French revolution. He was in every tumult; when in 1520 the city was convulsed by an outbreak of party hatred, he was one of the faction which strangled Alessandro Bichi in the archbishop's palace, defeated the Pope's troops at Camollia, and defied Clement VII. by tearing the bull launched against Siena. Through him we have a glimpse of the populist clubs, those hot-beds of lawlessness. At first a member of the *Libertini*, he became later a leader of the *Bardotti* (the Scot free), composed of Socialists or rather Communists of an advanced type, which for some time terrorized the town.

The *Bardotti*, who called Saint Catherine their patroness, met on Sundays to read Livy's Roman History, or Macchiavelli's Art of War, and to perfect themselves in fencing, for every man was bound to defend the institution at the sword's point, and to challenge any one who spoke ill of it. Apparently they fenced to some purpose, for the insolence of

## ITALIAN CITIES

these swashbucklers became so unbearable that the magistrates broke up the club. Pacchiarotto was imprisoned, ruined, exiled from Siena, with a price upon his head and a promise of a free pardon to whomsoever should put him to death. While trying to reach the church of the Osservanza for sanctuary, to escape pursuit he was forced to hide himself for two nights and days in a tomb with a corpse. After many other misadventures, he died in poverty and exile. Unfortunately, his most remarkable work has perished; on the walls of his own room he painted a multitude of figures kneeling, bowing, and prostrating themselves in various attitudes of deference and admiration. Here, surrounded by the homage so stimulating to the orator, amid a silence which was equally grateful, he rehearsed his political speeches, and triumphantly confuted his opponents' arguments. This art-work of poor Pacchiarotto may commend itself to a later age, an age of many clubs and over-much oratory, of willing talkers and reluctant listeners.

The ardent temperament which urged the artist into public life sometimes sought other forms of expression, and the Sienese painters were often zealous devotees. Many of them were workers in the noblest of the city's charities, the great hospital. Vecchietta left all his property to it, and Matteo di Giovanni, painter of hideous massacres, had charge

## SIENA

of a ward there, and is styled "*il fervoroso fratello*" in the records.

But the painter-saint of Siena, the "*Pictor famosus et homo totus deditus Deo*," was Sano di Pietro; he was a gentle spirit moving quietly among those sons of Thunder, his fellow craftsmen. Some of the scanty records of his blameless life are pathetic: thus the books of the parish prove that though very poor, with a wife and three little children to support, he had adopted an orphan "for the love of God." Sano, whose life was "one long hymn to the Virgin," was an innovator in his way; while the fire-eaters were as conservative in art as they were radical in politics.

To the readers of Rio and Lindsay, to the student of the evolution of art, the gallery of Siena possesses a unique interest. To the lovers of painting who admire a dexterous or scientific manipulation of material, or a pictorial and personal treatment of well known subjects, it will not appeal.

The first bewildered question it suggests is, where were the eyes of those art writers who compared this gallery with those of Florence, and who considered the Sienese as rivals of the early Florentine masters? The dates of the pictures show that these men were in the nursery, stumbling over the rudiments, while Filippino and Ghirlandajo and Botti-



## ITALIAN CITIES

*f* celli were painting their frescoes. No wonder that the Sienese held fast to the Lombard Bazzi when he came a-visiting. Until then (1501) they had not seen an artist who had mastered his material.

While the Florentines were unearthing antiquity, discovering the laws of perspective, drawing from the nude and studying anatomy, their Sienese contemporaries were tranquilly copying Byzantine motives. The artists of Siena, dear to the writers on so-called Christian art, never passed through a period of experiment and investigation; they never originated, but were imitators, always taking their knowledge at second-hand, following, first, the Byzantine tradition, and later, the Roman school under Sodoma's influence; leaping at once from immaturity in Francesco di Giorgio and Matteo di Giovanni to decadence in Beccafumi and Peruzzi.

What then was their contribution to art?

*f* The Sienese painter, as we have already seen, detached the Byzantine mosaic from the wall of the basilica; borrowing the old motives and types, he translated them into painting and produced the altar-piece. This triptych or diptych, which was not only set over the shrine, but found its way into oratory and bedchamber also, brought art into contact with daily life. He humanized Madonna; the stern, black-browed goddess of the churches of Ravenna became a gracious, fair-haired lady; the

## SIENA

attendant angels, instead of standing stiffly on either side of the golden throne, grew graceful and suppliant; the rigid, staring saints unbent a trifle, and occasionally there was an attempt at a dramatic gesture or a tender expression. Working in a more flexible medium, freedom of treatment grew little by little, until the painter had loosened the golden fetters of Byzantium and Art began to move. He could only loosen them, however. He still clung to the old forms for the brave soldier, the daring politician, was a timid conservative in his studio. Why, after taking the first step, did he stop short? Why, after having attained dramatic expression with Duccio, grace with Simone Martini, and grandeur with Lorenzetti, did he not march on with Giotto, with Masaccio and Lippo? Why, for two hundred years, did he move in a vicious circle?

The answer to this question may be found in a glance at the environment of the painter.

In Siena the two influences which powerfully affected Florentine art, the scholar's enthusiasm for antique beauty, the burgher's love of facts and exact detail, were lacking. Out of these apparently conflicting tendencies grew the great art of Florence and the Renaissance based on the study of antique sculpture and the observation of nature. But if Hellenism and shop-keeping obtained in Florence, mysticism and free-booting were characteristic of

## ITALIAN CITIES

Siena; she was as proud of her saints and her popes as her rival was of her poets and her historians and her woollens; the intelligent curiosity, the love of scholarship, the keen appetite for knowledge of the Florentine, were in the Sienese replaced by an ardent piety and an equally keen appetite for pleasure. The positive common-sense and the burgher virtues of Florence were despised in credulous and impassioned Siena. She had spurned antique beauty, and although two great sculptors, Jacopo della Quercia and Vecchietta, called Siena home, they had no influence apparently on her painters. Nor did these painters study Nature, for their environment acted upon them in a yet more direct and practical way. What the pious and unlettered Sienese required of them were images of devotion, not objects of art, something to pray to, not to criticise, a vision of Paradise, not a glimpse of every-day life.

From the collection of altar-pieces in the gallery, we can form a very clear idea of how the painters supplied this want.

The triptych was a favorite form, a *Maestà*, or Majesty (*i. e.* a Madonna and child sitting in state surrounded by saints and angels) the most popular subject. The Virgin, as befitted the sovereign of Siena, is always represented as an aristocrat, a potentate, a feudal princess. The Coronation and Assumption are painted again and again, but we

## SIENA

look in vain for a Nativity, an Adoration of the Shepherds, or of the *Magi*, subjects dear to the Umbrian and Florentine schools.

"To the Sienese the golden background was always inseparable from a devotional picture," wrote Rio in his "*Art Chrétien*," adding, "this must not be attributed to the narrowness of their views, but to the extreme orthodoxy of their taste." The background then behind the Queen of Heaven is of dazzling, unshaded gold, wonderful intricate patternings wander over the jewelled robes, real gems shine in the "rich fret of gold" on Madonna's head, the Saints are gorgeous in surcoats "embroidered like a mead," and the peacock-winged angels are no whit less fine. The Sienese had given the Byzantine Madonna life; the naturalistic Florentines made her human. They took the diadem from her brows; they despoiled her of her regal robes; they bade her rise and walk. In their hands, the bejewelled patrician became a proud young mother; the divine Child, the little jointed puppet who sat stiffly blessing a contemplating universe, a human baby who played and crowed and wondered at his own dimples, while meek Saint Joseph, who in Ravenna and Siena was banished altogether from the celestial court, enjoyed a sort of honorary Papaship, and helped the dear little attendant angels, just out of the nursery, to mind the baby.

## ITALIAN CITIES

In a word, the Holy Family became the Human Family.

The Florentine treatment of secondary figures, the introduction of portraits, of domestic animals, man's humbler brothers in the *Presepio*; the landscape backgrounds with their flower-enamelled meadows and winding streams, were almost as distasteful to the Sienese devotee as was the vulgarization of the Madonna. There was no feeling for out-door Nature in the gilded altar-piece; there a Midas touch had turned the flowers to goldsmith's work, and stiffened the glistening robes on the rigid limbs. Occasionally an artist made a timid effort to acquire a freer manner; but he was too weak to persevere, and he soon returned to the type that "extreme orthodoxy of taste," which was such a different thing from "narrowness of views," had fixed for him. Thus deprived of the influence of antiquity, of the study of Nature, nothing remained but the Byzantine tradition qualified by touches of personality in unimportant details, and Sano di Pietro was considered an innovator because he painted round, instead of almond-shaped eyes.

And yet in these pictures, with their flaring gold and ultramarine, their plaster crowns and applied ornaments, there is an unmistakable decorative quality. There are exquisite conventional designs in the halos and orfrays, and in the heads a certain

## SIENA

stiff grace and awkward tenderness which possess undeniable charm, — a charm which appeals even to those who do not believe that a painter's feeling is always in the inverse ratio to his technical ability, and that the absence of knowledge implies the presence of sentiment.

With the dawn of the sixteenth century Pinturicchio, the Umbrian, and Bazzi, the Lombard, came to Siena, and the artists and their patrons awoke to a comprehension of the grand, free art of the Renaissance and "orthodoxy of taste," and golden "Majesties" vanished forever into the limbo of things that were.

## V

AND what manner of men were they, the patrons for whom these solemn altar-pieces were painted, for whom Madonna must be glued fast to her throne, and the divine Child stiffly displayed in his jewelled robes like the Sacrament in its monstrance?

What was the theory of life, the moral standard, the ideal of these buyers of gilded triptychs?

These are difficult questions to answer, and complex as were the Sienese, it were easier to define their dominant trait, *i. e.* intensity; their overflowing vitality wreaked itself on so many different forms of effort, the old volcanic fire ran in the veins of sinner and saint, now devouring and destroying, now rising in a pure flame, but glowing alike in ascetic, patriot, and sybarite. Austere as the brown town looked on its bare hill-top, it was famed for delicate living, and the novels of Illicini and Sermini, the poems of Beccadelli and Folgore, depict an artificial and corrupt society given over to pleasure-seeking, — a society which, though elegant and luxurious, lacked the principles of true refinement. It possessed neither moderation, self-control, nor mental poise; under the veneer of courtesy and high-flown senti-

## SIENA

ments, were the untamed instincts, the puerile superstitions of ruder times ready to break bounds at any moment. The young knight who bore down all the lances in the tourney, and looked a very Saint Michael as he knelt in the cathedral, would burn and slay like a brutal mercenary, and the youth who fasted until he fainted in Lent, and tore his bare shoulders with the scourge, would serenade his neighbor's wife at Easter.

The time not spent in praying and fighting was passed in a joyous fashion; the fingers that could grasp the sword-hilt and count the chaplet, were cunning at the lute strings. Pleasant sinning led naturally to unpleasant repenting. After a season of long prayers and short commons, ginger was hotter than ever in the mouth, and they who had plunged deepest in the emotional excesses of penitence were foremost in brawl or revel. Nor was this surprising. The exercise of certain forms of piety is apt to co-exist with worldliness, and religious aspiration is not necessarily associated with moral rectitude. The rigid observance of formulæ was no restriction on impulse or desire, and the Sienese undoubtedly repeated his morning prayer before going out to sack his neighbor's house.

And he was not merely a fighter and a free-liver, he was an exquisite as well. "The Sienese are as vain as the French," wrote Dante in the thirteenth



## ITALIAN CITIES

century, and though he was not distinguished for the impartiality of his opinions, the criticism was just. They loved magnificence in dress; their weakness for millinery left its impress on their art; they bought the rich brocades which sober Florence manufactured but rarely wore, and no doubt were wont to lie awake o' nights "carving the fashion of a new doublet;" the embroiderers and goldsmiths of Siena were famous throughout Italy, and we can still see their work on the celestial dandies and jewelled saints of the picture gallery. They had a pretty taste for dainty trifles, and imported musical instruments from Germany, pearls and perfumes from Venice, and from France ivory caskets and mirror covers, delicately carved. They curled their hair, and shaped their eyebrows like Chaucer's Alison and admired a delicate pallor. Nor were they wanting in mental artifices. When not ferocious, they were courteous; it was indispensable that a lady should be sentimental, and a little languor was considered becoming to a lover.

They were fond of novels; not of the cynical, cruel Florentine tales, but of stories of gentler jests and light loves tinged with dreamy voluptuousness, set in familiar backgrounds of gardens and arras-hung chambers. They had their ethical code too, and agreed "that the three most eminent virtues of a generous nature are courtesy, gratitude, and liber-

## SIENA

ality." They had but a poor opinion of learning; among all those Greek and Latin manuscripts for which their neighbors, the Florentines, were paying such prices, there was not a single treatise on hawking or dog breaking. The minute and laborious scholarship of the time had as few charms for the devotee, as for the ruffling gallant who was as intellectually apathetic as he was physically active. The learned churchman was a *rara avis* in Siena until the day of Æneas Sylvius. Why study with the philosophers when one could dream with the mystic? Why plod with the humanist when one could rise heavenward on the wings of ecstasy with the saint?

They were not unaccomplished, however. They could improvise poetry of a thin impressionist quality; write stories, not well, but in an unprofessional, fashionable manner; they played and sang "like people of quality;" they could dispute or rather argue, as we say now-a-days (though perhaps the older term was the truer one), principally on questions of sentiment, and sometimes even convince a lady that reputation was an excellent substitute for honesty. Pious observances and a fantastic code of honor did not prevent people from enjoying themselves; on the contrary, these restraints lent piquancy to much that a more liberal age has robbed of savor.

For a pictorial presentation of Sienese social life,

## ITALIAN CITIES

we can turn to a poet of the thirteenth century, Folgore da San Gimignano, who, though a native of the little burg which still wears a civic crown of mediæval towers, was a true son of luxurious Siena.

In a series of twelve sonnets addressed to a gay company of Sienese gentlemen, he described with the minuteness characteristic of his age, the pastimes and occupations of the nobles. Each of these sonnets, named after the months of the year, highly finished as the miniatures of a missal-border, is a brilliant and animated picture of contemporary life.

In them the joyous company, the "*godereccia, spendereccia, brigata*" of Dante rides past us, a gay procession so vividly depicted that we seem to see the patternings of the embroidered surcoats, and touch the garlands of spring flowers, and hear the jingling of harness and a sound of psalteries as the cavalcade canters by in the easy swing of the sonnet.

All travellers have learned, sometimes to their cost, how often it is *festa* in Italy, and the holidays were twice as numerous in the old times when whole weeks were devoted to merry-making. After the privations and suffering of a campaign or a siege, the good things of life were enjoyed with a keener zest; the very uncertainty of human existence caused men to live in the present and eagerly snatch at each passing joy, and never were earthly

## SIENA

delights more appreciated than by those who at any moment might be obliged to renounce them forever.

The great Italian nobles kept open house, *corti bandite*, at Christmas, Pentecost, Easter, mid-summer, harvest-time, and all through the month of May. To these festivals came not only belted knights with their squires and varlets, their horses, hawks, and hounds, but noble ladies with their pages and bower-maidens, and every one who could sing a song or tell a story; poet and musician, buffoon and juggler found a warm welcome, free quarters, and generous largesse.

It was the busy idleness of these "house-parties" which Folgore described in his year of sonnets. For these past-masters in the art of delicate living, every season had its special diversion, every day its pleasure-party, every evening its revel. In January the "joyous companions" were installed in comfortable chambers, warmed by roaring fires, and lighted by many torches, where they shook the dice or leaned over the chess-board; while for exercise they snowballed the girls whom they met in their walks. February found them hunting boar and wild goat, returning at night to mulled wine and part-songs before the kitchen fire. In March the fishing season began; the painted boats skimmed over the lakes, and the larger craft were made ready for rough

## ITALIAN CITIES

weather ; eels, lampreys, and sturgeon were caught, and no priests nor friars were invited to eat them. With April the scene shifted, for the Tuscan spring had come, not coyly and timidly as though loath to leave the lap of winter, but royally, like a sovereign taking possession of the land. On the fine grass of the pleasaunce the Provençal dance was formed ; the ladies sauntered through the flowery ways of blossoming orchards, or cantered on Spanish jennets between budding hedges ; the air was filled with the throbbing of the lute and the sound of young men's voices, while serenades sung the spring nights to sleep. May was a festal month when the girls went a-maying and youths met in the tourney. The sonnet is as crowded as a wall-panel of Pinturicchio with detail and color, and is filled with the stir of the joust. The polished shields and shining helms glistened in the southern sunshine ; the lists were gay with brilliant housings and mantles and pennants ; there was shivering of lances, splitting of shields, and the armed breasts and foreheads of the horses clashed together. Down from balcony and casement, where the girls leaned out, came a shower of garlands ; a flight of golden oranges was tossed up to the assailants, and then there followed much discourse of love, punctuated with kisses on cheek and mouth.

In June the gay folk retired to a small town

## SIENA

perched on a wooded hill,—a fantastic town like those we see in Pinturicchio's frescoes of the Library, gleaming white among thick-leaved trees, a town watered by many fountains, where the lawns were threaded by streamlets, and the pleasant ways were all embowered with trees, orange, palm, and lemon. In this true believer's paradise, the time was passed in mutual courtesies, for here was Love lord paramount. (*Le gente vi sian tutte amoro-se.*) July was spent in Siena, cooled by the mountain breezes and protected against the heat by the thick walls of the palaces, and August was passed in the mountains. In September the shooting season opened. The goshawk shook its jesses, and the falcon rose into the still air; wild fowl were shot and snared; the bowstrings twanged, the dogs strained at their leashes, and the hunters made jests that were ancient in Dante's day. The sonnet is a vividly realized bit of mediæval *Venerie*, and still faintly echoes the sound of the horn and the thin tinkle of the falcon's bells. In October there was visiting, hunting, and shooting, dancing in the long autumn evenings, and over-much drinking of wine new and old. Rainy November sent them to the baths of Petriola, and the last sonnet of the series ends the year with more junketing and a bit of heartless advice.

Of the beliefs and doubts that were troubling


## ITALIAN CITIES

men's minds, of the great causes that were at work in the thirteenth century, this singer of fashionable frolics and mediæval finery gives us no hint. He is blind and deaf to the new ideas, the soul-stirring enthusiasms which filled the intellectual atmosphere and manifested themselves in Protean forms; which burst into song in Dante, ripened into scientific inquiry in Frederick II., and made wise laws and planned mad crusades in Saint Louis.

Of the noble ideals, of the divine yearning which inspired the *Imitatio*, of the love that with Beatrice's poet became religion, of the religion that with Saint Francis became love, there is no sign in Folgore's sonnets. He is no full-throated nightingale to celebrate such themes, but only a little grasshopper drunk with honey dew, chirping shrilly of clear skies and plenteous harvests. But his epicureanism never degenerates into coarseness, and although he is too fond of wine-bibbing and good cheer, he is a true Italian in his intense susceptibility to beauty in all its forms. It is interesting to note in this forerunner of the Renaissance the survival of the indomitable joyousness of antiquity which had endured through all the storms that swept over Italy. A passionate appreciation of the delight of the eye and of the pride of life are as strong in Folgore as they were in Ovid, as they continued to be in Claudian.

## SIENA

And yet the descendants of these sybarites, pleasure seekers themselves, set an example of heroism to Europe; this luxurious folk, exquisitely susceptible to pain, starved to death by thousands rather than sacrifice its civic liberty. It was of these coquettish, squeamish ladies that Monluc wrote, "I would rather undertake to defend Siena with her women than Rome with her men." And if we would learn what human beings can endure for a beloved cause we must read the story of the siege of Siena. It is not a pleasant story; indeed it would be an intolerable one were it not that the chronicle of cruelty and wrong is also a record of supreme self-sacrifice, of torture and agonizing death bravely borne for the sake of an ideal. A natural shrinking from painful and repulsive images would prevent us from opening these hideous pages in the city's archives were it not for the glory as well as the anguish of the civic martyrdom which they reveal.





## VI

It is difficult to understand this last scene in Siena's civic tragedy without a glance at the events which preceded it. By the middle of the sixteenth century the long struggle of Frenchman and Spaniard for supremacy in the peninsula had ended. Since the victory of Pavia, Charles V. had won every move, and the French king, remembering the prison of Madrid, played his losing game half-heartedly and by proxy. The emperor, with a ferocious, unpaid army at his back, was the true master of the situation. Since his alliance with Pope Clement VII. and his coronation at Bologna (1530), Italy, terrorized by foreign troops and stunned by repeated sacks and massacres, had sunk into political bondage under a foreign monarchy and intellectual thralldom under an elective priesthood. Tyranny, temporal and spiritual, had made a desolation and called it peace. Venice, the only strong Italian power, had been weakened and dismembered by the Holy Father's League of Cambrai; Cosimo de' Medici, richest and most powerful of Italian potentates, new-made duke of rebellious Florence, was a moneyed lackey who paid for the privilege of imperial

## SIENA

service, and the rest of the states of Italy were nominally governed by puppets moved by the emperor.

Siena, who had followed her old Ghibelline policy and prostrated herself before Charles V., fared no better than the other Italian towns.

In 1551 she had been for twenty-one years under the yoke of the emperor, who had ruled, or rather oppressed, the city by a patrician *Balia* backed by a Spanish garrison. Again and again the burghers, after sending complaints and embassies to the emperor, had risen against these petty despots, and as often Cosimo de' Medici had terrified them into submission again. Finally the erection of a citadel by imperial order, to cow the city gave the death-blow to Sienese Ghibellinism, and in despair the old republic signed a treaty with Henry II. of France.

In 1551 war broke out in Italy between the French king and Charles V. Hostilities had just begun when two illustrious Sienese exiles, Piccolomini and Amerighi, at the head of three thousand insurgents, appeared before the gates of Siena. The brown ramparts were crowded with the burghers who had braved the lance-blows of the Spanish guards to welcome their countrymen. The leaders, riding close under the walls, heedless of the Spanish fire, called on them to rise against their tyrants

## ITALIAN CITIES

in the name of France and of liberty. Invoked by these mighty names (potent to conjure with in many an age and country) the quenchless spirit of the old republic awoke again; the people rose as one man and, unarmed as they were, stormed the gates, which they opened to their countrymen. Gathering force at every step, the wave of revolt swept into the great market-place, driving the Spanish soldiers before it, rushed through the narrow streets, and surged around the gaunt Dominican convent above Fonte Branda, where the foreign troops were quartered. After much hard fighting the Spaniards gave way and retreated in good order to the citadel, and the Sienese were their own masters once more (1552).

Rejoicings had not ceased when Louis de Lansac, French ambassador at Rome, arrived in Siena accompanied by Cardinal Farnese and Niccolò Orsini. To them the Spaniards, too proud to yield to mere Italian burgesses, capitulated, and evacuated the town (August, 1552), leaving the citadel to be destroyed. Then occurred one of those dramatic episodes in which the history of the commonwealth was so rich. As we read, the heroic figures detach themselves from the yellowed pages and pass before us in solemn procession. For to these passionate patriots this demolition did not mean only the destruction of a foreign stronghold, — it was the

## SIENA

renunciation of a national ideal, of the emperor whom Siena had loved and served for centuries. Therefore this significant act was accomplished with due ceremony. The captain of the people, the magistrates and clergy, the nobles and burghers, crowned with olive, marched under the national standard to the citadel, and after a formal delivery of the keys the trumpets sounded the charge; from every church tower rolled the answering thunder of the bells; the knights unbuckled their corselets, the monks tucked up their gowns, the magistrates stripped off their stately *lucchi*, seized pick and shovel, and with deafening shouts of "France" and "Liberty," which silenced the trumpets and made the bells swing soundless in their towers, the demolition began. "In one hour, more of the fortress on the side of the city was destroyed than could have been rebuilt in four months." In such joyous fashion ended the first procession of the siege of Siena. There were two more such "progresses" later, less triumphal, perhaps, but more glorious.

For a time the palmy days of the old republic seemed to have returned. Charles V.'s armies failed to take Montalcino; Cosimo, always on the winning side, signed a treaty with Siena in which he promised to remain neutral, and the Duc de Tormes arrived with troops and military stores from France. The emperor, angry with Cosimo and irritated by

## ITALIAN CITIES

his own failure before Metz, sent a curt order to disband the troops, "as the Duke of Florence was determined to leave the French in Siena."

But the Duke of Florence wanted neither Frenchmen nor Spaniards in the city he coveted. A true Medici, traitor to the heart's core, hoping for the jackal's reward when the lion was glutted, he had been playing a double game; Charles V.'s resentment and the arrival of Piero Strozzi as lieutenant of the King of France in Siena forced him to make his first real move.

Piero Strozzi's father had been treacherously murdered by Cosimo, Piero's own fortune had been confiscated, and a price had been set upon his head. "For revenge he was willing to move heaven and earth, and even hell itself." Rich, high in the favor of the Queen of France, Cosimo's own cousin; an able general fresh from the victory of Metz; respected and admired in Florence, he was a formidable adversary to be met at once.

While reassuring the Sienese, Cosimo secretly pledged himself to Charles V. to drive the French from Siena with the help of the emperor's German and Spanish troops. In concert with the Marquis of Marignano he planned to enter the Maremma and the Val-di-Chiana and to capture the fort outside the Camollia gate simultaneously. The first two enterprises failed, but Marignano took the Palazzo

## SIENA

del Diavolo and the fortress (1554), as the Sienese, completely duped by Cosimo, were quite unprepared for resistance. Piero Strozzi, who had been fortifying in the Maremma, hurried back, and the Camollia gate was strengthened with incredible rapidity by the united labor of men, women, and children.

The Sienese ladies turned this toil into a pageant, to the great admiration of a certain French gentleman, who fortunately has left a detailed account of the whole affair. This "Vicomte de Bourdeille, Abbé de Brantosme et d'André," then serving in Siena, who was as good a judge of a gown as of a stockade, and knew the points of a fine woman as well as the range of his own arquebuse, saw "on Saint Anthony's day in the month of January three bands of Amazons appear at the Campo." Each band was a thousand strong (*toutes belles, vertueuses et honnestes dames*), with its own banner, colors, device, and noble leader; all were magnificently habited in violet, crimson, and white *à la Nymphale*, the long cotes caught up to show the steel greaves; the helmets crushing the curls beneath them in a charming travesty of the grim men-at-arms. Each lady carried a fascine on her shoulder, "and all resolute to live or die for liberty," they marched to the fort which was rising, course on course, under the enemy's guns and

## ITALIAN CITIES

fell to work with a will; the whole city followed them, and the walls rose as if by enchantment. When the sun sank they re-formed in the Campo and, ranged in battle order, sang a hymn to Siena's sovereign Lady; then, after they had every one knelt a moment before that smiling Madonna which Bazzi set against the rough wall of the old palace and received the cardinal's blessing, "each one went to his home resolved to do better in the future."

Meanwhile, in spite of hymns and blessings and Amazons, Marignano, Cosimo's general, had completely blockaded the town, and Cosimo, throwing off the mask, had sent twenty-five thousand men into the field, had set a price of ten thousand ducats on Strozzi's head, and declared his intention of putting every Florentine taken in arms to death.

The war soon began to assume a ferocious character owing to the inhuman orders sent from Florence and executed to the letter by Marignano. Strozzi, against his will, was obliged to make reprisals: one of them is characteristic, a popular preacher was employed by the Sienese to pour oil on the flame of hatred by reviling Cosimo in his sermons.

By March (1554) the country around the town had become an arid desert; villa and farmhouse, orchard and cornfield, had disappeared; every mill and aqueduct had been destroyed, and the Sienese, penned in the city, had to look on hopelessly while

## SIENA

the brave peasants who attempted to supply them with food were tortured and hung by Marignano's Spanish and German soldiers. Obsolete cruelties were practised, and the episodes of the siege recall the military atrocities of the fourteenth century. But the perpetrators of these archaic barbarities, the imperial veterans who had learned their hideous lessons too well in the sacks of Rome and of Prato, were met by spirits as fierce and resolute as their own.

The desperate resistance which they encountered everywhere culminated in that of the old peasant woman who, after the capture of Turrita by Marignano, persisted in shrieking "Lupa! Lupa!" (the war-cry of Siena), instead of "Duca!" (that of Florence). Blows and kicks and sword-cuts could not silence her; half-mad with insults and tortures, she would not desist, and when the soldiers, infuriated by the resistance of so weak a thing, stripped, gagged, and crucified her, nailing her like a hawk to the city gate, every muscle of the agonized face which glared between the wefts of her white hair showed that she was still struggling to scream "Lupa! Lupa!" to her tormentors. Indeed, it seemed as if the spirit of the Roman wolf on their standard had inspired the Sienese; as Marignano, egged on by Cosimo, safe in the fortress-like palace of Florence, increased his cruelties, the Sienese redoubled their heroism. The



## ITALIAN CITIES

inhabitants of the castelli, or walled towns, were threatened with death if they resisted after the first discharge of the besieger's artillery, but each tiny burg, its walls manned by half a dozen combatants, dared to withstand Cosimo's veterans. The citadel of Asinalunga was defended by a Roman captain, aided by four cross-bowmen and as many peasants, against the best troops of Germany and Spain. He was summoned and offered good terms, which he refused. When finally forced to surrender, he was brought to the Florentine general, De' Nobili, a nephew of Julius III., who asked him what had induced him to attempt a defence against an army. His answer was worthy of record: "I remembered the brave deeds of the Romans, and being a Roman, with arms in my hand, I wished to fight as became a Roman." This calm reply sent the general into a rage: "And like a Roman thou shalt die!" he yelled, cutting the prisoner over the head with his sword. The soldiers finished the sorry work, and in a few moments all that was left of him who had remembered the Romans was thrown into the moat to fatten the gluttoned crows, — the only living things which were full-fed during the siege of Siena.

Although a pope's nephew generally fell below the ethical standard of his age, this was a typical instance of Cosimo's military methods and what scant mercy the Sienese had to expect from his lieutenants.

## SIENA

The history of this political war forms a melancholy commentary on the brilliant civilization of the Renaissance; in an age of royal knights and fashionable chivalry, of pious observances and religious reformation, of courtly manners and exquisite refinement, the commonest notion of fair play and the admiration which courage, even in an opponent, commands were conspicuously absent; as for the milder virtues of compassion for the conquered, or pity for the sufferings of the enemy, if they existed at all, they had no appreciable effect on human action. Worst of all, these atrocities were ineffectual; they did not strike terror, and in each captured town a new tragedy was enacted.

Meanwhile, the besieged were bearing their privations gallantly with that smiling fortitude which is the Latin substitute for our sterner-lipped Northern endurance. Provisions were scarce and dear, but the poor were fed at the doors of the great houses. Private fortunes were sacrificed to public necessities. Games were celebrated, holidays kept, and if hunger pinched, the jewelled girdles were drawn closer, and the lips and cheeks that paled with fasting were touched with those tiny red balls brought from the Levant for Beauty's use in happier times, a patriotic coquetry which Saint Bernardino himself would have forgiven. And then there was daily comfort for high hearts, if not for empty stomachs, in the diurnal

## ITALIAN CITIES

visit to the ramparts to jeer at Marignano's unsuccessful efforts to change the siege into an assault; and individual patriotism was much stimulated by this direct personal contact with the enemy, — an enemy who was not a vague, dark mass under a cloud of smoke several miles away, but a real, visible opponent, whose cross-bow twanged in the ear, whose scaling-ladder rasped the stones at one's elbow; so near that one could count the rivets in his armor, could see the blood gush from his wounds, could hear his taunts and answer them with curses. As artillery was still undeveloped and man was yet a creature of primitive impulses, the rage of battle, the *gaudium certaminis*, was still his.

News good and bad broke through Marignano's lines to the besieged; money came as well over the harried country from Paris, Lyons, Venice, and Ancona, where banished patriots and generous sympathizers had brought their gold or copper to the market-place for the cause of Italian freedom, and the rich Florentine exiles, Altoviti, Medici, and Soderini, undeterred by the certain confiscation of their property by Cosimo, gave their purses and their swords to the Sienese.

But the promised aid from France was slow in coming. Montmorenci, always opposed to the Italian war, was at the king's ear, and suspense had become apprehension when a panting and dusty peasant

## SIENA

brought tidings of a French squadron at Port' Ercole with three thousand Grisons on board.

Cheered by the news, Piero Strozzi made a bold move on Pontedera, by which he hoped to call Marignano away from Siena, and by joining the Grisons and another French army from Mirandola to carry the war into Florentine territory. As the French did not join him the manœuvre partially failed, but Siena had a respite of two weeks, and Strozzi revictualled his army from the French fleet in the Maremma before he returned to Siena with its new French governor, Monluc.

Blaise de Monluc has told the story of the siege and his part in it in "Commentaries" which might have been written with the point of his own sword; in these sharp, trenchant sentences, so different from the ample, flowing periods of Brantôme, the death agony of the republic is told with a soldier's simplicity. The man as he reveals himself in his work was a typical Frenchman of the sixteenth century, sagacious, honest, loyal, and cruel. A *preux chevalier* at Siena, a ferocious bigot in France, his name, which shines in Italian annals, is written in fire and blood in the history of Protestantism.

While Siena was left under the care of this ruthless persecutor of Huguenots, Marignano after a sharp skirmish in which he was much distressed had decamped, followed by Strozzi. Strozzi's campaigns

## ITALIAN CITIES

belong to the history of Italy; only their results can be considered here, and their effect on the besieged. On August 3 (1554), terrible news came to Siena: a great battle had been fought the day before (August 2) at Marciano; Strozzi had been defeated, had lost twelve thousand soldiers, and with a broken remnant of his cavalry had fled to Montalcino. A few days later this report was verified by the reappearance of Marignano and the renewal of the blockade.

And now Siena began to starve in earnest: the population of the town sank from thirty thousand to ten thousand souls, and fifty thousand peasants perished during this siege of fifteen months. Can any description of individual suffering equal the eloquence of these figures? "At the close of the war few of the old inhabitants remained," wrote Adriani, and the fertile Maremma became a fever-haunted waste. Cosimo had decreed pain of death against any one who should bring or send provisions to the starving city, but the heroic peasants daily brought their scanty stores of oil and corn to relieve her; they were killed by hundreds, hung at the doors of their blackened cottages, spitted on the roofs of the rifled granges, or, worst fate of all, reserved for those floating hells of stripes and chains and galls, the Grand Duke's galleys. For the beloved city no sacrifice was too great, no torment unendurable,

## SIENA

undeterred by death or mutilation they served her, and when the town starved, it was because the peasants themselves were dead of hunger. In "redeemed" Italy, where monuments are rising fast to commemorate her heroes, no one celebrates these nameless martyrs, no statue or tablet tells the story of those who, famishing themselves, died to feed the hungry.

Meanwhile, so high couraged were the burghers, that though famine — not scarcity nor privation, but actual famine — was in their streets, there was no question of capitulation; encouraged by Monluc, by the French victories in Piedmont, and by the unfortunate but indomitable Piero Strozzi, the Sienese still hoped and endured. "As God lives, not one man young or old stayed at home, all took arms resolute to eat their children before they would yield," wrote Monluc.

Again and again one of these starved soldiers would fall lifeless out of the ranks or a sentry would faint at his post, and daughter or sister would put on his armor and keep his watch on the bastion. Shadows that once were men plucked up the grass between the cracks in the pavements and ate it; gnawed at the raw hides in the tanners' quarter like famished curs, and maddened with hunger invaded the churches, tore down and devoured the great altar candles, drank the oil from the lamps

## ITALIAN CITIES

which hung before the shrines of the impassive saints, those saints so deaf to prayers, so blind to anguish.

It was not until they had grown wolfish from the famine-pinch that the Sienese resolved on that terrible sacrifice which in earlier days had so often been made by the old commonwealths, the ejection of the useless mouths.

*Le bocche inutili* were those who exhausted the supplies and rendered no military service, who ate and could not fight; the beggars who in prosperous times haunted the church doors and the monastery gates, and by receiving their charities helped rich folk to gain heaven; the artisans of the poorer sort and their families; the old and infirm poor; the cripples and the physically afflicted; the peddlers; the street singers, all those who gained a precarious livelihood from day to day. These poor, emaciated wretches were to be thrust out of the gates to die between the walls and the enemy's camp.

Perhaps nothing in history is a plainer proof of the immense difference which existed between the man of the Renaissance and ourselves than the fact that such a measure was passed and executed by good citizens, and was considered by them to be not only justifiable, but meritorious, a sacrifice on the altar of civic liberty. But the sight which followed it must have wrung the stoutest heart. To describe

## SIENA

it adequately one would need the soul and the pen of Dante's self.

These unfortunate creatures had lived in suspense ever since the beginning of the scarcity. Hoping to be forgotten, they had hidden themselves in holes and corners until famine had forced them into the streets again, where they starved publicly in hourly apprehension of their fate. The order was not executed without resistance, such resistance as age and fear and weakness could make when driven to despair. The phantoms struggled with the soldiers; the cripples struck feebly at the lances with their crutches; the women, many of them with skeleton babies in their lean arms, fought like wild-cats, biting, scratching, and clinging with bleeding nails to the house-walls, the doors, even to the stones of the streets; some of the older folk wrapping their rags around them lay stubbornly down on the pavement and were crushed or beaten to death by the men-at-arms; some clung about the soldiers' knees and were kicked along by the iron solerets; others tried to escape and were hunted back again; many fell from weakness and were dragged along bruised and bleeding; the stronger craftsmen, rolling their tatters about their lank arms, tried to fend off the sword-strokes; one or two stupefied by terror walked on straight before them, staring with unseeing eyes and groaning aloud; while others besought the mercy



## ITALIAN CITIES

of every passer-by, or begged for a few minutes' grace to say a prayer before a shrine. From all this wretchedness an awful clamor rose: shrieks for pity; curses in voices faint with hunger or hoarse with fear; blasphemies of all that man holds holy; prayers to every saint in heaven; screams of pain; heart-shaking sobs; the dull thud of lance-blows on meagre shoulders; yells inarticulate and inhuman like the cries of tortured animals, and now and again the loud mocking laugh of some miserable creature crazed with fright.

Finally, in spite of their impotent resistance, the work was done. When the last clutching, shrieking wretch had been thrust through the postern and the gate closed, came the turn of Marignano's soldiers. Though there was no plunder to be had, yet for men who had been diverted with *autos da fé* and Indian-hunts there was sport left in this poor flesh which could still suffer; the stronger men were tortured by past-masters in the art of torment until they had told all that passed in the city and were then hung; the weaker and less fortunate were driven from town to camp, from camp to town, hunted down by the Spaniards and Sienese alike, and tossed to and fro like scum on the waves until they perished in the filth of the moat.

While Siena was afflicted with this "horrid spectacle for humanity," as Galluzzi writing in milder

## SIENA

times termed it, there came a message from Cosimo, the *impresario* of such spectacles. He assured the government that he did not war against the liberties of the Sienese, but only required them to place themselves under the emperor's protection. Charles V. had declared Siena forfeited by rebellion to the imperial crown, and Cosimo offered himself as mediator between the republic and the emperor. Henry II. had given Siena permission to treat, but it was not until March (1555), when all hope was dead and when not one blade of grass remained uneaten in the streets, that the intrepid city yielded; the first ambassadors sent to Cosimo were still so high-hearted that they proposed their impossible conditions as boldly as though Siena were victualled for a twelve-month, and were sent back by Cosimo. A fortnight later eight others appeared in Florence, and on the second of April the treaty, or rather the death-warrant of the republic, was signed. The terms sounded well: Siena was to remain free, but the emperor would appoint twenty of the governing *Balia* and a garrison would be admitted; no citadel was to be built without the consent of the people; the forts thrown up by Marignano around Siena should be demolished; a general amnesty (except for rebels) proclaimed; the inhabitants could emigrate or remain in the city as they chose, and the French should be allowed to retire with flying colors.

## ITALIAN CITIES

On the twenty-first of April (1555) the last procession of the siege was formed. On the harried space around the walls, not long ago a smiling paradise of villas and gardens and thrifty farms and orchards, Marignano's army was stationed to witness the evacuation of Siena. Two rows of veterans in complete armor were drawn up in double ranks outside the Roman gate at which for nearly two years they had battered in vain. In dead silence the herse fell, and through the lane of steel marched six Gascon battalions and four Italian columns, with Monluc at their head. Mere tattered spectres they were, their clothes in rags, their ranks sadly thinned, but their arms were bright and the unconquered white banner floated over the heads which were still held high. Behind them came the self-exiled Sienese who had learned from the fate of Florence how a Medici kept faith with misfortune. Two hundred and fifty noble houses and three hundred and forty-five plebeian families preferring exile to slavery, cast in their fortunes with the French and went with the troops to Montalcino.

"I had seen," wrote Monluc, "a lamentable spectacle when the useless mouths were ejected from the city; but I beheld more than equal misery in the departure of those unhappy ones who left Siena with us and in those who remained. Never in my life did I behold so painful a parting, and though

## SIENA

our soldiers had suffered every hardship, still this separation afflicted them, and the more because they were unable to preserve the public liberty. As for me I suffered more; I could not see this calamity without tears, and sorrowing deeply for this people which had shown itself so ardent in the preservation of its freedom."

This is the testimony of a connoisseur in misery, and in truth it must have been a sorrowful sight which moved even the pitiless to pity, for, touched by the aspect of this homeless and friendless folk, the Spanish soldiers brought their own bread and distributed it to them as they passed, and Marignano gave Monluc a scanty supply of provisions. But these succors came too late, and the route across a country so wasted that "from Montalcino to Siena, from Siena to Florence, not a living spirit moved upon the face of the land," was marked by the bones of those who fell and died of hunger. And with those patriots who could not bear to see the enslavement of their country the spirit of civic liberty departed from Siena.

## VII

THAT admirers of minute designs and florid detail could appreciate grandeur as well, no one can doubt who has seen the plans of the Sienese cathedral. Its history is one of a grand result, and of far grander, though thwarted endeavor, and it is hard to realize to-day that the church as it stands is but a fragment, the transept only, of what Siena willed. From the state of the existing works no one can doubt that the brave little republic would have finished it had she not met an enemy before whom the sword of Monteperto was useless. The plague of 1348 stalked across Tuscany, and the chill of thirty thousand Sienese graves numbed the hand of master and workmen, sweeping away the architect who planned, the masons who built, the magistrates who ordered, it left but the yellowed parchment in the *Archivio* which conferred upon Maestro Lorenzo Maitani the superintendence of the works.

The façade of the present church is amazing in its richness, undoubtedly possesses some grand and much lovely detail, and is as undoubtedly suggestive, with its white marble ornaments upon a pink marble ground, of a huge, sugared cake. It is im-

## SIENA

possible to look at this restored whiteness with the sun upon it; the dazzled eyes close involuntarily and one sees in retrospect the great, gray church front at Rheims, or the solemn façade of Notre Dame de Paris. It is like remembering an organ burst of Handel after hearing the florid roulades of the mass within the cathedral.

The interior is rich in color and fine in effect, but the Northerner is painfully impressed by the black and white horizontal stripes which, running from vaulting to pavement, seem to blur and confuse the vision, and the closely set bars of the piers are positively irritating. In the hexagonal lantern, however, they are less offensive than elsewhere, because the fan-like radiation of the bars above the great gilded statues breaks up the horizontal effect. The decoration of the stone-work is not happy; the use of cold red and cold blue with gilt bosses in relief does much to vulgarize, and there is constant sally in small masses which belittles the general effect. It is evident that the Sienese tendency to floridity is answerable for much of this, and that having added some piece of big and bad decoration, the cornice of papal heads, for instance, they felt forced to do away with it or continue it throughout.

But this fault and many others are forgotten when we examine the detail with which later men have filled the church. Other Italian cathedrals pos-

## ITALIAN CITIES

sess art-objects of a higher order; perhaps no other one is so rich in these treasures. The great masters are disappointing here. Raphael, as the co-laborer of Pinturicchio, is dainty, rather than great, and Michelangelo passes unnoticed in the huge and coldly elaborate altar-front of the Piccolomini. But Marrina, with his doors of the library; Barili, with his marvellous casing of the choir-stalls; Beccafumi, with his bronze and *niello*, — these are the artists whom one wonders at; these wood-carvers and bronze-founders, creators of the microcosmic detail of the Renaissance which had at last burst triumphantly into Siena. This treasure is cumulative, as we walk eastward from the main door, where the pillars are a maze of scroll-work in deepest cutting, and by the time we reach the choir the head fairly swims with the play of light and color. We wander from point to point, we finger and caress the lustrous stalls of Barili, and turn with a kind of confusion of vision from panel to panel; above our heads the tabernacle of Vecchietta, the lamp-bearing angels of Beccafumi make spots of bituminous color, with glittering high-lights, strangely emphasizing their modelling; from these youths, who might be pages to some Roman prefect, the eye travels upward still farther, along the golden convolutions of the heavily stuccoed pilasters to the huge, gilded cherubs' heads that frame the eastern rose.

## SIENA

Beneath the feet is labyrinth, that pictured pavement which, so bad in principle, is yet so splendid in reality. It is useless to theorize about its inappropriate ornament; we follow its mazes, every one of us, with that clue of Ariadne, the instinctive and natural delight in form wedded to story which is in us all, from the gaping peasant of Valdichiana to Dante studying the pavement of Purgatory, and Godfrey forgetting crown and crusade when once the pictured poems of the windows and the walls had met his eyes.

One cannot sufficiently praise the beauty of this *niello* work, which, wrought by Federighi and Beccafumi, and worn by the feet of three centuries, has been ably restored by Maccari and Franchi. Here we found the old block-pictures of earliest printed books, enlarged a thousand-fold, stretching from pillar to pillar in their black and white marble. Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence in their *tondi*, austere decorative in their simple lines; divided battle-pieces, where the knights had pillaged half their armor from the tents of Scipio, and half from the camp of Fornovo; sieges where antique profiles looked from the mediæval sallets; decorative, thick-leaved trees; veritable tapestries in stone, with dangling Absalom or conquering David; the seven ages of man; all framed by lovely conventional borders and friezes, medallions and patternings, one more pleasing than the other.



## ITALIAN CITIES

And, as if this were not enough, suddenly, at the intersection of nave and transept, the glorious pulpit of Niccolò Pisano rises before one, a nude antique athlete among these mediæval princes.

On the left is the Piccolomini Library with its gorgeous antiphonals and its frescoes. As we enter the sculptured doors, it seems as though we had opened a huge missal, and that the gold and ultramarine, the flat landscape, the ill-drawn but richly costumed figures, and the floriated borders of one of the great choir-books which line the room, had, in some mysterious way, been transferred to its walls.

It is incredible that these frescoes are four hundred years old. Surely Pinturicchio came down from his scaffoldings but yesterday. This is how the hardly dried plaster must have looked to pope and cardinals and princes when the boards were removed, and when the very figures on these walls — smart youths in tights and slashes, bright-robed scholars, ecclesiastics caped in ermine, ladies with long braids bound in nets of silk crowded to see themselves embalmed in *tempera* for curious after-centuries to gaze upon.

The first four panels are the most charming; they are a little hard, a little spotty, a little vulgarized by the applied ornaments of gilded plaster in high relief, and yet what charm there is in the pensive,

## SIENA

young faces, in the strange piled-up backgrounds, and what variety and elegance in the costumes.

The subject is a moral tale of the Renaissance: how a good little boy, by minding his book and obeying his pastors and masters, became a great scholar, a cardinal, and finally a pope. And to those who know the life of this saintly humanist, who was also a passionate lover of beauty and the literary forerunner of Théophile Gautier and Taine, it is pleasant to find this idyllic memorial of him in his native town. The whole library, too, is interesting as an example of homogeneous decoration; the wainscoting is enriched with the antiphonals, the vaultings shine with the grotesques of John of Udine; at one end of the room are the Piccolomini shields all a-row under the red hats, while just above the doorway Quercia has placed his muscular, nude Adam and Eve, whom the angel is very properly ejecting from the presence of all these finely dressed folk, and whom we find again on Fonte Gaia, where they are more at home.

## VIII

As a homogeneous and characteristic decoration important in its extent and absolutely representative of its time, Pinturicchio's series of subjects upon the walls and ceiling of the Libreria ranks among the most notable in Italy. The first impression derived from it is that of its freshness, its remarkable preservation ; the second is that of its gayety, its richness, its ever fertile, tireless fancy ; the third is that of its completeness, its homogeneity. These last two impressions are altogether favorable, but the critic in asking himself with some surprise how the first impression of phenomenal preservation has obtained soon realizes that it is the result of the sacrifice of certain distinctly artistic qualities. Such wonderful preservation, although immensely effective, does not necessarily infer in this effectiveness the presence of those qualities which in a *frescante* may be accounted as even technically the highest. The liberal retouching *a secco*, that is to say, the repainting (by Pinturicchio) with dry color after the first true fresco had been absorbed by the plaster, has given to the work an astonishing brightness and an occasional regilding of the parts originally touched

## SIENA

with gold, has added to this brightness, until some of these figures appear to have been painted only yesterday. But it must be understood that for the sake of this brightness Pinturicchio sacrificed transparency and harmony. The *a secco* retouching produces an opacity of color wherever it is used, in a word, the painter has sacrificed true richness of color to that factitious richness which is only brilliancy of surface. The impression afforded by the Sienese Library, which is genuine and abiding, is that of decorative completeness, of homogeneousness, and of a certain splendid gayety.

The secular impression is, above all, surprising, as one passes through the doorway which opens directly from the cathedral into the library. The Duomo of Siena, in spite of its nobility and beauty, is too sumptuous, too much of a museum, to be accounted among the most solemn of shrines ; but it is solemn indeed if compared with its neighbor, the Library, which stands at its side, and indeed almost within it, like a pretty acolyte at the elbow of some gorgeously robed archbishop. Here the Renaissance has full play in the carved pilasters, in the scrollwork of the vaulting, and even in the stained glass, and here M. Müntz, in criticising Pinturicchio, may justifiably use his clever quotation of the tombal inscription to the child who had danced for the Romans twelve hundred years before, "*saltavit et*

## ITALIAN CITIES

*placuit.*" But the painter, though no stylist, is a true decorator in the abundance of his cheerful motives, in his choice of entertaining material, and the realization of a most picturesque effect ; by right of all this, *placuit* truly, but by right of it also, he pleases still, and will always please. He is no dramatist, but he is a delightful story-teller, and, like the mediæval singers of interminable romance, he rambles far afield, and often loses the thread of his narrative in a labyrinth of episodes. But as the eye wanders with a certain pleased curiosity from a jewelled caparison to a quaintly slashed jerkin ; from a youthful, wistful face to a white castellated town half hidden in sombre verdure, we pardon this wealth of detail. The lovely adolescents, with their vague, wide-eyed glance and their dreamy, distant smile ; the sumptuous yet exquisite costumes ; above all, the sense of inexhaustible, facile invention, blind us at first to the defects in the drawing, and to the isolation of the painted personages who, each one of them, seems to be leading a separate existence of his own, and has little or no relation to the other figures in the same composition.

And not only the figures, but the groups also, are isolated from each other, making a sort of open-work pattern agreeable in general lines, nevertheless too thin and lace-like to adequately represent such dignified and balanced arrangement as the subjects

## SIENA

required: stately subjects, — royal marriages, processions, councils. Many masters of the fifteenth century cannot avoid confusion in their large compositions, but their masses, if awkwardly composed, usually continue to be masses. Pinturicchio's groups break up into little knots of people who stand in somewhat papery silhouette against the background, and in artists' phrase, his composition is often full of holes. As for his draughtsmanship, he could draw on occasion excellently, — witness the faces in his fresco of the Sistine Chapel; but he did not often rise to such occasion; perhaps because he was too hurried, or perhaps because he did not care. At all events, whether hurried or indifferent, he was exceptionally canny in his relations with his patrons. He knew the influence of bright gold upon both the clerical and the laic imagination, the effect of the glitter of a gilded surface in relief. "Ghirlandajo," says Vasari, "did away in a great measure with those flourishes and scrolls formed with gypsum on bole and gold, which were better suited to the decoration of tapestry or hangings than to the paintings of good masters."

If Pinturicchio had heard this criticism, he would have smiled, ordered more gold and ultramarine, and set his apprentices to kneading more gypsum. He frankly substituted this material richness for hard thinking, and, instead of giving careful drawing to his figures, he was satisfied with that valuable

## ITALIAN CITIES

decorative factor, a handsome general pattern. He knew well how to spare his labor and so apportion it that expenditure of time and thought should be in economic relation to his result.

In giving to Pinturicchio his place in the history of Italian art, the substitution of a rich surface for the intellectual treatment which goes deeper; of graceful pattern for a manipulation making greater demands upon draughtsman and colorist, is the most notable phenomenon to be considered.

This is because a mode of procedure common within certain limitations to nearly all *quattrocento* masters was pushed farthest by Pinturicchio, who, just when gilded ornament in relief was to pass away from all great mural painting, gave it a kind of apotheosis in the Borgia apartments of the Vatican. Some consideration of these famous apartments is necessary to any real understanding of the painter's methods, since he there gave them their fullest application, using a tonality differing wholly from that of the Libreria, and thereby rendering a study of the latter all the more interesting.

On the walls of the Torre Borgia we at once recognize the economic relation of parts; in the hall of the "Lives of the Saints," for instance, the large mural subjects are fairly well drawn and grouped; but when he came to the divisions of the vaulting above, the painter no longer troubled him-

## SIENA

self at all about execution, but set in the middle of his space some handsome pattern, an *ædiculus*, a throne, or what not, modelled in relief in that gypsum which Vasari condemned, and which lastly was brightly gilded. On either side of the central pattern he placed little men or women kneeling, climbing, holding scrolls, all utterly weak in drawing, weak even in the detail of their silhouette, but excellent in their general pattern. Thus the artist, with but little expenditure of the labor and thought which he furnished, lavished the gold and ultramarine which the Pope furnished, and obtained with the minimum of personal output great richness, indeed, splendor of result. Contrast all this with the methods of Raphael as master-workman of the Vatican loggie; there his apprentices executed, even in the darkest corners, in convolutions of tiniest scrolls passing out of sight in a spandrel point behind some jutting moulding, little figures which recalled, if ever so roughly, the style and amplitude of the master.

The equivalent figures of Pinturicchio are starved and pinched, poor little affairs with no reserve force behind them, but in the general economy of a decoration they, with much less of output, served their purpose as well as the figurines which Raphael inspired and his pupils drew, served it better, indeed, in a way. Photographed and seen in detail by themselves, some of the figures of the loggie scroll-work



## ITALIAN CITIES

or the Vatican tapestry borders would make Pinturicchio's little people of the ceilings seem children's scrawls ; but the two painters had different results in view, and produced them each in his own way. Both wished for a rich effect, but Raphael sought cheerful elegance which should be neo-classic and should not depart from the great tradition. Pinturicchio refused to part with one jot of the *quattrocento* paraphernalia of the decoration ; he knew that a Borgia bull in gold relief upon ultramarine, surrounded by gilded scrolls backed by the same rich blue, would "carry" better, would make a far stronger effect as one looked along the vaulting, than could any figurine in simple fresco, no matter how large the movement, how good the modelling of the muscles, that Perino or Giulio had executed and Raphael had inspired.

So Niccoli di Betto went on in his own way, modelling his bulls and rams and little temples in gypsum ; emphasizing the lines of a youth's armor, breastplate and girdle, greaves and collar, with rows of gilded disks, relieved slightly, but quite highly enough to catch the light, and backing his figures with a reticulated pattern again in relief of gold.

The painter of to-day shrugs his shoulders in surprise at the method and stares in delight at the result, for the great artist Time has taken a share in the work. When the color was fresh three hundred

## SIENA

years ago, the violence in contrast in certain parts must have been shocking, but now the ultramarine has bloomed in spots of green and purple, the gold is bright here, tarnished there; disintegration of surface has helped rather than hindered, and as a result is seen the richest fresco-color in Italy; only mosaic or glass can surpass it.

We have gone afield with Pinturicchio and followed Pope Pius from the Libreria of Siena to the Vatican, but the journey is necessary to the full comprehension of the painter's product; and if before leaving Rome in thought, we remember Niccolo's frescoes in the churches of Ara Coeli and in S. M. del Popolo; even if on our way back to the Libreria we stop at Spello, we shall find our painter, as in the Vatican, always the man who succeeds by right of fancy and fertility and by a frank renunciation of the finest methods in mural painting in favor of greater gorgeousness and richer surface. In the Borgia apartments the dominant color effect is of ultramarine and gold; in the Libreria the basis is white, the white of the plastered walls, and their light tonality is what yields the cheerful quality which here replaces the gorgeous richness of the Roman work.

Against this light-colored background the drama of the life of Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini as cardinal and pope unrolls itself among emperors and queens, guards and pages, bishops, priests, and Turks, who

## ITALIAN CITIES

stand under canopies or about thrones or carry papal chairs, — canopies, thrones, and chairs alike furnishing to Pinturicchio the raised gold patterns that he loved, while soldiers offer to the artist their shields and weapons for like embossing, and even the pages of the middle distance contribute at least a trifle of a belt-clasp or dagger-handle to be raised and gilded. It is delightfully decorative, and yet the very negation of aerial perspective, since these distant figures are brought forward by their relieved patterns to, as it were, the footlights of the stage.

Certain critics have praised Pinturicchio's landscapes; they are indeed pleasant reminders of the Umbrian background, a background at once so lovely and so noble that *any* reminder of it is grateful, but to compare them with the landscapes of Perugino is injustice to the latter. Imagine a little church or temple in raised and gilded gypsum stuck against the middle distance of Pietro's solemn background of the Maddalena de' Pazzi fresco; it would seem and would be, an excrescence, but in the Libreria, where the art, good as it is, is on a lower plane, belt-clasp and crown, throne and sword-handle, are entertaining parts in a vastly entertaining whole. And that it is entertaining, cheerful, wholesome, and pleasant to the eye no one will deny. Pinturicchio *saltavit et placuit* truly, and it is enough, for, alas! how many dance and how few please.

## IX

FOR the complete expression of the complex soul of her Siena had to wait for the dexterous Lombard who in 1501 knocked at her gate. Here was indeed a painter after her own heart. No frigid Florentine this, with the memories of chisel-work in dusty *botteghe* clogging his brush; no student of "anatomies" with a weakness for joints and attachments, prone, therefore, to thrust a meagre Jerome or a gaunt Magdalen into a tender brood of angels or the blithest of Holy Families; no curious, erudite experimenter seeking after a (possibly) fatiguing perfection and juggling with light and shadow; no precisian or pedant he, but one to whom Temperament had been so bountiful that he had ignored the favors of that more niggardly mistress, Training.

Invited to Siena by the noble family of the Spanocchi, patronized by Chigi, Sodoma (Giovan Antonio Bazzi) found his native element in the capricious and voluptuous republic; and Siena soon discovered in him the whimsical scatterbrain and facile painter, her most faithful exponent. She had but scant enthusiasm for Beccafumi's cold academies; she bestowed but a half-hearted admiration

## ITALIAN CITIES

on Peruzzi's spare elegance; she disregarded the strictures of the correct and respectable Vasari, and loaded Bazzi with commissions and admiration. What was mastery of perspective, unfailing sense of proportion, balanced composition, compared with a vivid personality expressing itself with agile facility and possessed of exquisite sensitiveness to grace and beauty!

And then the character of the man himself was one to captivate the Sienese, among whom individuality ran riot. Here was no Sano *deditus Deo*; no sour-faced frequenter of monks, but a good fellow; a contemner of conventions; a dandy, devoted to fine clothes; a sporting man, too, with a pretty taste in horseflesh, and a prince of jesters to whom a practical joke was dearer than reputation or personal safety. What a wellspring of joy to the gilded youth of Siena was this frolicsome gossip, who would lay down his brush to finger the lute or grasp the bridle, and who could paint you the suavest Madonna in a studio full of roistering sparks. Imagine the decorous and laborious Vasari visiting such a lawless household, and the continual shocks to which his bourgeois susceptibilities must have been subjected. His animosity to Bazzi is almost accounted for by the mere difference of temperament in the two men.

How could the "most noble art of design" be

## SIENA

worthily practised by a freakish fellow who made friends and comrades of beasts, and who owned a familiar raven which, to the mystification and annoyance of dignified persons from Florence, could exactly counterfeit his master's voice? And was not Bazzi's explanation, that he kept the bird by him in order that it "might teach a theological jackass how to speak," an aggravation of his offence? Could sound painting be reasonably expected from a pretentious dauber who bought fast horses like a noble, and who had the impudence to win the race of Saint Barnabà in Florence over the heads of Florentines, biped and quadruped? It would seem that effrontery could not go farther, but Sodoma had found the means of gilding the refined gold of his iniquity by insulting the Signory as well. Messer Giorgio was constitutionally incapable of sympathizing with a reckless wag who joyed in carrying a jest beyond the bounds of propriety, and who was no respecter of persons.

Bazzi has paid dearly for his mocking humor, or rather, his lawless indulgence of it. Vasari's biassed judgment has formed opinion for four hundred years, and the gifted Lombard has suffered from his censure. Poor Giovan Antonio! much shall be forgiven him, for he loved much those dumb sentient creatures who can only reward kindness with devoted affection that is all the truer, perhaps, because it is

## ITALIAN CITIES

mute. They must be their pranksome master's best advocates with those who love man's "little brothers."

The other reasons for Vasari's unjust treatment of Sodoma are as yet undiscovered. As a man (not as an artist) the Lombard painter was constantly vilified and abused by the usually impartial biographer. Vasari's friendship and admiration for Beccafumi may have prejudiced him against Bazzi, Beccafumi's rival; perhaps there is some truth in the story that Bazzi laughed at Vasari's biographies (which were seen by many in manuscript long before their publication), and thus roused the rancor of their author. Wherever Vasari remains an art critic, he is honest and unprejudiced; his blame is just, his praise not stinted, when he speaks of Giovan Antonio's best works. When he writes of the man and not the artist, he is, on the contrary, censorious, even bitter, and most unfair; the love of fine clothes, which Vasari finds dignified and decorous in Leonardo, the master, is ridiculous in Giovan Antonio, the "jack-pudding" and "mountebank" pupil. Da Vinci's admirable love for animals is equally reprehensible in Bazzi; and the latter's passion for racing, shared by all the Sienese citizens and the Florentine nobles, is most objectionable in the painter. In Siena it was, and still is, accounted a great honor to win the *Palio*. Indeed, what was vainglorious in Sodoma was proper pride in a Florentine; it was a Tuscan

## SIENA

custom to decorate the windows upon *fiesta* days by hanging out rich stuffs and banners, and the cloth-of-gold racing-prizes of the Alessandri were famous in Florentine archives. Whatever the Vercellese artist does, as a man, is ill done, according to our author, but we may remember that while several of Vasari's stories told to the artist's discredit are disproved by documents, not one is confirmed. Bazzi seems to have spent the last years of his life in retirement at Siena with his family, and Vasari's statement that his wife was separated from him is unsupported by documentary evidence. We know that in 1531 and in 1541 she was living with him, and we have no proof that she ever left him.

It is highly probable that, after all, Giorgio's injustice to Bazzi came primarily from an inability to understand him. The whimsical, roguish Lombard, with a little of the charlatan and much of the boy in his character, was incomprehensible to the earnest, studious, laborious Florentine, and Bazzi's love of frolic and his light-hearted willingness to appear worse than he was, gave Vasari sufficient cause to distrust and despise him. The most charitable and not wholly unreasonable estimate of Giovan Antonio's character is that he was the sixteenth-century counterpart of a type of artist constantly seen among the students of the European art schools of to-day; namely, the *blagueur d'atelier*, the studio-jester.



## ITALIAN CITIES

The *blagueur* is a madcap, sometimes an idler, sometimes a busybody; constantly boasting of his misdoings, which are always exaggerated, and sometimes purely imaginary, and sacrificing anything at any time for what he considers a joke. He is no respecter of persons, is more or less foul-mouthed, generally more; delights in being conspicuous, and, above all, troublesome; joys in shocking the respectable and outraging the conventional; personal dignity does not exist for him, and reserve is an unknown quantity; but he is quick-witted, good-hearted, and as ready to help as to hinder. He is utterly improvident, and though sometimes capable of brilliant artistic performances, is not a little handicapped by laziness, though in time of war or revolution the laziness gives way to action, and the *blagueur* has supported his convictions or served his country as well as the most earnest of his comrades. Just what Giovan Antonio was like we shall probably never know; Raphael seems to have esteemed him, and he was a favorite with the Sienese; there is no testimony to support the charges against him, and the story of his domestic unhappiness is disproved by documentary evidence. That he was often lazy and indifferent seems to be shown by his work, but we cannot call him weak artistically, for he was distinctly individual and saw nature from a personal point of view, perhaps no artist ever possessed

more temperament than did this spoiled child of painting.

Considered from the point of view of technique pure and simple, Bazzi was unequal as draughtsman and colorist, indifferent as composer. He could draw excellently, but rarely did; his heads are a souvenir of Leonardo's with a strong added personality of Bazzi's own; as to their bodies, his figures often look as if some of Raphael's frescoed men and women had been painted with so liquid a medium that they had *spread* upon the walls and passed beyond their outlines, until they seemed boneless and gelatinous.

M. Müntz, praising the figures of the Farnesina frescoes, says of them, "*Les figures sont du Raphaël, mais du Raphaël plus fluide et plus suave.*" This is precisely what they are to so great a degree that their fluidity has made some of them relatively shapeless and very unsatisfactory to the student, although their suavity has, it is true, much of the charm which never deserted Sodoma.

In these frescoes of the Oratory of San Bernardino Giovanni has attempted to be monumental, and has succeeded in obtaining a certain impressiveness and an *ensemble* which is thoroughly characteristic of the amplification that art had received in the beginning of the sixteenth century, but these figures are lacking in construction, still more are they lacking in subtlety of drawing. They look exactly like

## ITALIAN CITIES

figures in old tapestries, which have been stretched and pulled until not one line in face or figure is correct.

The admirable figures (see especially the Saint Victor) in the Palazzo Pubblico have all the qualities which belong to those in San Bernardino, and most of the qualities which are lacking in the latter. The grave and beautiful warrior-saints are constructed, drawn, and modelled with seriousness and skill, and they are noble in expression as well. The San Benedetto is also admirable. If Bazzi had always worked as earnestly as he did upon these figures, few painters would have equalled him. The frescoes at Monte Oliveto without possessing the Florentine hardness of contour, resemble Milanese work and are agreeably firm in silhouette, yet not dry or "cut out." In spite, however, of an occasional effort to better his slurring and slovenly manner of drawing, Bazzi is generally lacking, and wilfully lacking, in "the probity of art."

His color (being more an affair of temperament and more instinctive) is sometimes warm and transparent; sometimes distinguished, as in the "Swooning of Saint Catherine,"; sometimes monochromatic, as in the "Saint Sebastian," is often pleasing and never disagreeable.

He had little capacity as a composer of groups, and was most at home when he had but one or

## SIENA

two figures to deal with; composition did not come easily to him; lacking mental order and sensitiveness to distribution of masses, deficient also in the capacity for continued effort in a given direction, which is indispensable to the evolution of monumental composition, Bazzi is confused and incoherent when he attempts to handle a number of figures. Nowhere are the abilities and the limitations of a painter more clearly demonstrated than in the chapel of San Domenico. There the noble lines of the three figures in the "Swoon of Saint Catherine" stand side by side with the jumbled and crowded fresco of the "Execution of Tuldo," which affords a felicitous illustration of Degas's criticism: "*On fait une foule avec cinq personnes, non avec cinquante.*"

Sodoma's finest performances are his single figures, and it is in them that we read his title clear to the admiration of his contemporaries. The Saint Catherine fainting under the intolerable glory of her espousal is one of those relatively rare works which give to Bazzi a very high rank as a complete artist, and not merely as an artist of phenomenal temperament. He has treated a very difficult subject not only with charm but with skill and thought, adding to his natural suavity a care in the grouping of the three lovely heads, in the arrangement of the draperies, and in the rendering of the latter, which

## ITALIAN CITIES

is not often found in his works. As for the spiritual side of the picture, it may be said that the poignant delights of mysticism were never more adequately interpreted. The "Saint Sebastian," which "combines the beauty of the Greek Hylas with the sentiment of Christian martyrdom," is in a certain delicate loveliness and simple pathos unsurpassed by any work of its time. Yet in spite of the fact that its comeliness is informed with spiritual significance, that the representation of suffering is free from exaggeration, in some subtle way it announces the decadence, the work of Guido Reni, and of the seventeenth century. Although the drawing of the figure is far more serious, the silhouette more studied, than in most of Bazzi's work, it must be admitted that as a whole it is lacking in solidity and is even papery-looking in its lack of modelling.

The figure of Saint James on horseback, in the church of San Spirito, has been much praised; but though it fills the space decoratively it is a poor affair in execution, slurred and careless, and is little to the credit of a master who was capable of far better work. The horse especially is singularly ill drawn for the work of an artist who was himself a sporting-man and a judge of horseflesh.

To estimate at their true value Bazzi's freshness of feeling and natural charm combined with sensu-

## SIENA

ousness and an unfailing sense of humor, we must leave Siena and drive over a dull-colored cretaceous soil furrowed by *balze*, to the monastery of Monte Oliveto.

No environment could be more inspiring than the magnificent mountain country about the convent, made marvellously picturesque by the countless ravines which seam the hills on either side of the winding, ribbon-like road that leads from Buon Convento to the monastery. From its terraces are seen Montalcino on its aerial platform, the delicate lines of Monte Amiata crowning a wide sweep of hills, Chiusuri on its height, the valleys torn and rent by the torrent-beds; a strange landscape grand and impressive in its desolation. Almost equally stern and forbidding is the aspect of the monastery itself, a huge pile of purplish-red brick, raised upon gigantic buttresses above a wave-like crest of the hill. Its austere lines are broken only by the church with its square campanile and the machicolations of the fortress-like gate, pierced with loop-holes, which defends the entrance of the long avenue of cypresses leading to the convent courtyard.

Amidst these solemn surroundings, more sympathetic to the fiery and virile genius of his predecessor Signorelli than to the mischievous and beauty-loving Bazzi, the cycle of Saint Benedict was painted. In these frescoes, commenced in 1506

## ITALIAN CITIES

and still in admirable preservation, there is nothing which rises to the height of two or three of Sodoma's best pictures, but as a series it is, on the whole, the most *amiable* of his works. In their wide, sunlit cloister, protected from damp and wind by the glass with which the government has filled its outer arches, nothing could be more cheerful or attractive than these clear-colored frescoes, light in tone, free in their handling, yet far more *serrés* and close in drawing than are many of the artist's more pretentious pictures.

There is a certain childlike sweetness, a simplicity of arrangement, a genial sense of humor which is as completely suited to the presentation of these indescribably petty miracles and trifling temptations as the genius of Signorelli was unsuited to it. The subjects themselves, forming "a painted *novella*" of monastic life, are utterly puerile in character, and their whole charm is in their treatment. Of such motives as "Saint Benedict miraculously mends a Sieve," Bazzi, by the beauty and sweetness of his types; by the introduction of portraits; by perfect naturalness; above all, by that *naïf* charm which five years later was forever stricken from Italian art by the splendors of the *Stanze* and the lightnings of the *Sistina*; by the qualities of simplicity, freshness, and vivacity, Giovan Antonio turns these rather absurd subjects into a series of pictures which please

## SIENA

enduringly. The frescoes of the angles of the court are more than pleasing and are executed with greater thought and care than the smaller compositions. Tradition whispers that this superior excellence was the result of an increase in the painter's stipend, that the agile brush "which danced to the sound of coins" (*ballava al suono dei denari*) was properly piped to. Indeed, Bazzi's vivid personality, his pranks and eccentricities, ~~were~~<sup>were</sup> a brilliant scarlet thread through the gray woof of the monks' lives, and legend has been busy here and has handed down an anecdote for each fresco. In one, Bazzi painted the portrait of a greedy monk slyly abstracting his meditative neighbor's manchete of bread; in another above the terse title, "*Fiorenzo conduce male femmine al convento*," he earned his name of *Mattaccio*.

In this fresco, wherein the wicked Florentius, who was the *diabolus ex machina* of the cycle of Saint Benedict, and supplied the indispensable dramatic element, brought singing and dancing women to the convent to turn the good fathers' minds from holy things. Hidden by his scaffolding, Bazzi painted these winsome girls, who are even to-day utterly bewitching and far too well calculated to turn poor mortal man's thoughts from heaven to earth. These seductive ladies were represented in the costume of Mother Eve, their worthy predecessor in evil doing. And we have only to remember the sweet, shame-



## ITALIAN CITIES

faced figure of our peccant ancestress in the "Limbo" of the Academy to realize how alluring they must have been. Imagine the scandal, the laughter, the scolding, which filled the cloister when the planks were removed, and fancy the blissful elation of Bazzi and his color-grinders and apprentices.

Of course the artist was immediately obliged to turn milliner and to perform one of the most urgent of the temporal works of mercy, but Sodoma was willing enough to double his labor in the good cause of a practical joke, and the group of girls, a harmony of melodic lines and fluent movement, remains one of the most delight-inspiring creations of the Renaissance. Every note in the scale of coquetry from demure dignity to mocking provocation is delicately yet surely touched by these long-limbed dancers and coy *donzelle*. Plastically there is still something of the fifteenth rather than the sixteenth century about these figures; they are graceful, not monumental are suggestive of Leonardo da Vinci; are characteristic of the northern as distinguished from the Tuscan manner, and possess the rhythmic movement and enticing loveliness of Bazzi's ideal type.

In the student of "the human document" the full-length portrait of Giovan Antonio stimulates speculation and seems to afford a clew to that strange personality in which Ariel and Puck met on equal

## SIENA

terms. In the long series of the portraits of the Renaissance painters many are nobler than this one, none are more characterized; and though the artistic treatment is somewhat summary, the psychological treatment is subtle. Nature wrote wag and daredevil in capital letters on this face, with its large features, full lips, heavy brows, and irregular nose, — a real *nez fripon*, witty and impertinent. Nor does the characterization stop at the audacious, clever head under its loose mane of black hair. In the slender, lithe body of the gentleman rider (evidently Bazzi's racers were no weight-carriers); in the introduction of pet animals, the tame badger begging for a caress, and the offensively loquacious raven; in the rich costume, brought by the painter from a noble Milanese who had recently taken the habit, we recognize the freakish model of Vasari's darkly shaded portrait, made human and sympathetic by a more genial brush.

M. Müntz tells us that justice will not be done to this master until he has been placed near Correggio, indeed by his side (*immédiatement à côté de lui*). It is very rarely that one takes issue with the enlightened criticism of the author of the *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, but in this case it is impossible to accept his dictum. Great as he is, Bazzi, if placed by the side of Correggio, stands on a far lower plane. Charm he has and style to an

## ITALIAN CITIES

extraordinary degree, but where in his work is there any masterliness to be compared with that shown by Correggio in his cupola of Parma or his Saint Jerome? One is a discoverer and a creator, the other a most gifted and inventive Master of the Revels, who can amuse and fascinate and delight, but to whom the divine afflatus is denied.

The same charm of personality, of abandon, of naturalness, which subjugated the Sienese is potent over the critic who attempts to analyze the works of the fantastic Lombard. Bazzi reminds one of the old tale of the prince to whom all good things were given and yet whose career was spoiled by the malicious gift of one wicked fairy. No painter was more richly dowered by nature: facility, elegance, sweetness, were his; a keen and delicate feeling for grace of line and beauty of feature; remarkable powers of assimilation, and a fertile fancy; occasionally he attained distinction, and he rarely, even in his most careless moments, lacked style. But all these great qualities were obscured by one fatal defect,—frivolity. There is no better example of how much and how little temperament can do for an artist, or what painting becomes when it is divorced from hard thinking and laborious study. The absence of the appearance of effort, which is such a different thing from the actual absence of effort, is replaced in his work by a slovenliness that

## SIENA

is the more irritating because we feel that it is wilful negligence. Every one of his more ambitious pictures manifests carelessness or lassitude in some particular. His finest performances are his single figures (the Roxana in Vienna or the Eve or the Saint Sebastian); he lacked the mental coherence, the capacity for intellectual tension, which are indispensable for the planning and execution of large compositions, and though pathos and poetic feeling were within his scope, he was wanting in elevation of thought and, above all, in conviction.

Yet when all these reserves are made, when we have recovered from the annoyance produced by the wanton neglect of splendid gifts, how much remains to delight us in Bazzi's work. His sense of humor, a rare quality and one that is almost incompatible with intense convictions, which enlivens the frescoes of Monte Oliveto; his capacity for characterization, his vitality, the diversity and suppleness of his genius, are all potent factors in the sum of our pleasure. The greatest of these is doubtless his sensitiveness to physical beauty, above all the beauty of youth, of girls and adolescents. Who can forget the undulating lines of his dancers' slender bodies, or the morbid sweetness of the swooning Catherine, or the lovely cowering figure of Eve, or the coy, almost simpering, but altogether bewitching Roxana? Equally persistent in the

## ITALIAN CITIES

memory are the figures of the young warriors Alexander and Saint Victor, the beautiful Vulcan of the Farnesina villa, the transpierced Saint Sebastian, the charming boys in the Saint Benedict cycle. Bazzi's feminine ideal was derived from Leonardo's; less distinguished, it is more seductive; less noble than the subtle Madonnas of Luini, it is more captivating. An oval face with languishing eyes, an over-ripe curved mouth, the upper lip much fuller than the lower one; a delicate nose slightly *retroussé*; a softly rounded chin, and a slender, long-limbed body, such was Giovan Antonio's type. Add to it those *arie di testa* which Vasari admired, sometimes an air of dreamy voluptuousness which is as far removed from coarseness as it is from severity; again, a pathos and tenderness that suggest the influence of Perugino, and a quality of youth and freshness, something dawn-like and spring-like, and you have the ideal that took Siena by storm. Naturally this sweetness often degenerates into insipidity or becomes cloying; mere loveliness cannot atone for the lack of nobility any more than facility and fertility of invention can replace high thought and strenuous endeavor; but, after all, to analyze the faults of this alluring genius is almost as destructive to the fine edge of the critical spirit as to study the physical defects of a beautiful person.

## SIENA

To follow the triumphant progress of the Renaissance which entered Siena so brilliantly with Pinturicchio and Bazzi, would be a pleasant task; to retrace, step after step, their wanderings about the town from their homes in the Via dei Maestri, over the "Contrada Pictorum" to the churches where they worked, and to the palaces they painted, would be an easy one. For they were ubiquitous folk, and permeated the whole city, from the shrine of its saints to its outer gates. Pleasant, too, it would be to study the works and lives of Siena's youngest sons, Peruzzi and Beccafumi; pleasant to follow reverently in the footsteps of that impassioned daughter of Saint Dominic and the people, Saint Catherine; pleasant, also, but hardly as edifying, to wander with the novelists through the olive-orchards and those groves and gardens which Æneas Sylvius dedicated to Venus.

Pleasantest of all it is to dwell awhile with the memories that crowd these streets and haunt these walls,—memories tragic, dramatic, romantic; for the perfervid Ghibelline city was the home of romance, from the days of Dante's minstrel singing in the Campo for his friend's ransom, to our own times, when Alfieri could be seen galloping outside the Camollia gates in a whirlwind of dust. It is, perhaps, this romantic past; perhaps the splendid *élans* of self-sacrifice, the spontaneous acts of gener-

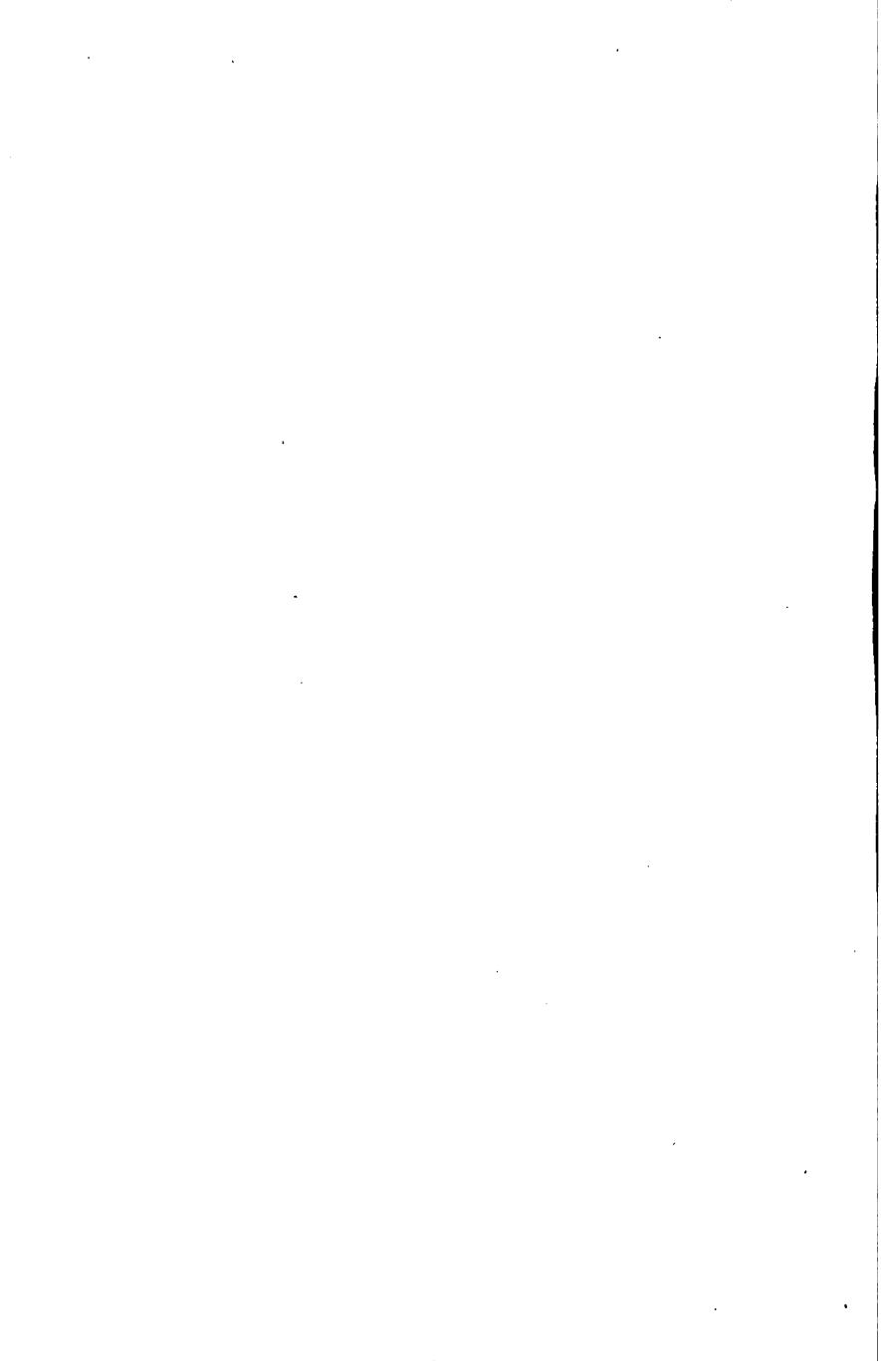
## ITALIAN CITIES

osity in which her history is so rich; the ardent faith in God and man which never deserted her, and the grandeur of her martyrdom that lend Siena an irresistible feminine charm. "*Il y a de la femme dans tout ce que l'on aime.*" Her contradictions are full of fascination and remind us that if, in her hour of need, the town gave herself to Virgin Mary, the Mother of Beauty has tarried within her walls as well.

All those who know Siena have felt this subtile coercion, and have opened their hearts to the beautiful city which wrote upon its gate, "*Cor magis tibi Sena pandit.*"

# **THE FLORENTINE ARTIST**





## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

IN these days of triumphant specialism, when brush and chisel, burin and aquafortist's tool, perform feats that would have set the Renaissance agog; when a phalanx of French artists stand armed *cap-à-pie* with all the varied knowledge that the years have brought to *Ars Longa*; when art pours in from England, Sweden, Russia, Japan; when America has already started in the great torch race, sure to hold the light high (how high perhaps we hardly dare to dream), why is it that we turn again and again to the old masters, the men of Florence and of Venice, of the quiet galleries and palaces of a land older than our own?

Is it because they take us out of the bustle and struggle and beckon us to their feet in the half light of the chapterhouse, in the sun-dappled stillness of the cloister or the deserted chamber of state where they sit enthroned and tranquil, nowise toiling for recognition? Is it not rather because theirs was the springtime of art, because they were in the gold of the morning and had its golden touch?

Theirs was the high-hearted conviction which has seen no disillusion. They had not even found out

## ITALIAN CITIES

what they could not do, and their *naïf* fervor set a halo even on their awkwardness. Eternal youth was theirs and its sublime confidence and audacity. Spontaneity was theirs, and the joy of the explorer as well. To-day we are bewildered worshippers at many shrines, and are burdened with a too costly heritage; they were unvexed by warring ideals and were the heirs of opportunity.

It is because they were the sons of morning that we find even in their lesser works ("*detur amanti*") something to reward patient study, something of the glamour of the reawakening, of the gladness of earnest endeavor, of the serenity of achievement, and, in spite of the science and perfected technique of modern painting, the hill towns of Tuscany and Umbria still rise as high altars of art; Rome yet remains the painter's pantheon, and the lagoons of Venice still shine for us with the color of Titian and still hold the bituminous depths of Tintoretto.

Among all the Italian towns, Florence possesses the highest place, for in that long period from 1300 to 1580, which covers the Italian Renaissance in its various phases, she was the focal point for at least two hundred years. This epoch of art evolution may be conveniently divided into four periods: that of the precursors, of Niccolò and Giotto; that of the early Renaissance, with the group which surrounded Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici; of the full Renais-

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

sance, when Rome called Tuscan and Umbrian alike into her service; and of that later time which, decadent elsewhere, saw the glorious supremacy of Venice.

Thus through fully two-thirds of the art movement Florence marched at the head of Italy, and we see the Florentine first as the strong man in armor, merchant and soldier at once, beating off Barbarossa, conquering his civic rights one by one, and setting the Phrygian cap of liberty upon his helmet; a later and milder age twists garlands about it, and sculpts his shield, and his son grows up a pale-cheeked student, with a crop of curls, a brush and chisel in his scarsella and a great book clasped upon his breast.

As we look at old pictures of this protagonist of independence, this Athene of towns who wore helmet and laurel alike and held palette and lance at once, we see that five hundred years ago she was still the grim-visaged and simple-mannered Florence of the Divine Comedy.

We turn from the pages of the pictured record. Another short hundred years transforms the fortress-city of Corso Donati into the palace-city of Lorenzo de' Medici; the Renaissance has come to its full tide and the Florence of Dante, which, lovely as it appeared in the dreams of the exile, was brown and austere as a Franciscan friar in its out-

## ITALIAN CITIES

ward semblance, had by the end of the fifteenth century become a treasury of beauty. Many different causes had contributed to this result: commercial prosperity; municipal freedom; the intense civic pride, the passionate love of the city that then stood for patriotism; the newly awakened plastic sense; the Italian desire to *far figura*; the lover's instinct to adorn the beloved; and the possession of generations of artists equal to their task, all united to dower Florence with innumerable treasures. The best blood of the time was running into this new channel and coursing there more and more strongly. The incessant warfare of earlier times, the death-grapple between city and city and between rival factions and greater and lesser guilds had ended in utter exhaustion, an exhaustion too often making way for a local tyrant; but the marvellous vitality of Italy, which in one way or another never flagged, showed itself in her art. The hand, tired of striking with the sword, struck lightly with the chisel, and the cunning Medici set the unwitting artists to gilding the chains of Florence. There were chains indeed; but the craftsman lives in a republic of ideas, and his craft was honored by the tyrant; he alone of all men was free, for the Inquisition had not yet begun to prescribe the action of the people of fresco or panel, or to peer through the eyeholes of its cowl into parchment

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

and picture to ferret out heresy. Cosimo the Ancient might say in his cynical way that it took only a few yards of scarlet cloth to make a burgher, but he never applied his yard-measure estimate to humanists or artists.

A noble field lay open to the latter, their works did not disappear into private galleries; art belonged to the whole city, and was a matter of personal interest and pride to each citizen; the façade or the monument was his, and he walked out to see it uncovered, in a flutter of pleasant excitement, and quite prepared to fasten his epigram or his sonnet at its base. For all Florence became at once customer and connoisseur, and fairly went mad with enthusiasm over its new masterpieces. The Signiory mingled with the business of grave embassies questions of decoration of public palaces, and art matters were treated like affairs of state. A daughter of the Republic, art's best service was given to the city, to the market-place, the townhall, and the church. This was no courtly official art, shut up in palaces; no burgher art, withdrawn into rich men's houses or cramped into prettiness to please a caprice; no carefully nurtured exotic, foreign to all its environment; it was democratic, municipal; "of the people, by the people, for the people;" stooping to the humblest offices; carving the public fountain, where goodwives washed their

## ITALIAN CITIES

cabbages and filled their clashing metal buckets, and rising heavenward on the broad curves of Brunelleschi's dome. It was a deep-rooted, many-branched growth of the soil; an integral part of daily life; a need, a passion, and a delight at once.

It almost seemed as if Art, Orpheus-like, held sway over nature. Rough crags piled themselves up into palaces, iron bowed itself into lovely curves, and bronze filled the hollow mould with fair shapes; glistening marbles covered the bare façades; acanthus and laurel, oak and ivy, lilies and pomegranates twined around the church pillars, climbed to the cornice, and clustered about the deep-set windows, ran over choir stalls, and thrust themselves between the yellowed parchments of the choral books. With them came the birds to perch among the bronze twigs and nest in the marble foliage; the lions crawled from their lairs to crouch beneath church pillars; unicorns, griffins, and strange sea-monsters came at the magician's bidding, to support a shield or bound along a cornice. Night lent her stars to roof a banqueting-hall; the planets shone over the exchange, and summer dwelt on the painted wall while winter whitened the streets outside.

Obedient to the call of Art the gods returned to earth. Fauns lurked in the rose-thickets, and the

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

falling fountain splashed the long limbs of reed-crowned nymphs. Behind the laurels Apollo struck his lyre, and in the shadow of oak and ilex glimmered the dryads. Eros again upheld beauty's mirror, once more Athene looked down from the library shelf and Italy remembered that she was the child of Greece.

Art then held both life and death in her hands. At her command the dead arose. She gave to longing eyes the image of the loved one, and bade a woman's face bloom for centuries. She touched the bare walls of the cloister, and a celestial vision broke through their chill whiteness. It was Art who laid the laurel on the brow of the illustrious dead, and such brief fame as we may know was hers to bestow.

It was within the field of this world of art that the hostile cities of the Renaissance found their one neutral ground, where the shrill voice of controversy was hushed, and hatred dropped its dagger; where the old feud was forgotten; where Guelph and Ghibelline, Palesco and Piagnone met as friends, united by a common sympathy, swayed by a common delight.

Something of this was dimly understood, even by the little apprentices who ground the colors and kept the clay moist. They knew that the masters went and came unharmed through harried country



## ITALIAN CITIES

and hostile states; they saw the Magnifico buy the pictures of a follower of the Friar. Even civic strife spared the artist who worked for the glory of the town, and was therefore sacred to the man of the Renaissance, who, though he could hate fiercely and strike hard, loved his city as a mother, and adorned her like a bride.

The city so loved and so adorned was not very different from the fair town set in the hollow of the hills which we admire to-day; it has lost its proud zone of ramparts and the glow of mediæval color, but otherwise it is comparatively unchanged since Donatello lodged in the street of the Melon, and Benvenuto kept shop on the old bridge. Here we can walk arm-in-arm with Gossip Vasari; every turn brings us face to face with the memory of a world-famed master. The very name of a street suggests some great artistic achievement; a few lines of inscription on a house-front start a train of association which quickens the pulse of the lover of beauty; all about us the very stones are eloquent, and if we would study the greatest of modern art epochs, and understand the environment of the Renaissance artist, — the conditions under which he lived and labored, — we have but to look at the city upon which he set his seal as a king stamps his effigy on the coin of the realm.

Four hundred years ago morning entered Flor-

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

ence much as it does to-day, slipping unchallenged through the ponderous gates, stealing like a gray nun through the narrow streets, glimmering faintly through the grated windows, and, leaving the lower stories of the crag-like houses still dark and sombre, touched with light the dome of the cathedral and the crests of those stern towers which spring upward like unsheathed swords to guard the white and rosy beauty of our Lady of the Flower. As the dawn struggled through the leaded casements, or the deep arches of the workshop, it saw the artist already at labor. Sometimes it paled the light fixed to Michelangelo's forehead, with which, "like a Cyclops," he worked through the long night; or surprised Master Luca patiently freezing his fingers over his new invention, the *terra invetriata*; or, maybe, it put out the lanterns which Ghiberti's workmen carried in their nightly walks from the furnaces in the Via Sant' Egidio to the Baptistery. Work began early for the Florentine artist; for the painter, sculptor, architect, worker in gold, iron, or wood, was first of all a handicraftsman with a handicraftsman's simple tastes and frugal habits. *Arte*, art, meant but craft or trade, and later, by extension, guild of craftsmen, and was applied to the corporations of cloth-dressers and silk-weavers, as well as to the associations of architects and sculptors.

## ITALIAN CITIES

"Then painters did not play the gentleman;" small distinction was made between the artist and the artisan ; and, though now and then a banquet at the new house in the Via Larga, or a little junketing in Albertinelli's wine-shop, or a gay supper at the Pot Luck Club (Compagnia del Pajuolo), opposite the Foundling Hospital, might tempt him to keep late hours, morning naps were exceptions, and the stone-mason, when he came through the dim twilight of the shadowed streets to his day's work on church or palace, found Brunelleschi or Gozzoli there before him. No wonder such men rose early ; the whole world of art lay before them, unconquered, unexplored. The mysteries of nature were to be solved, the lost treasures of antiquity regained. The processes of technique, the media of artistic expression, were to be discovered ; and for such achievement the days were all too short, and the nights as well. If they would play the sluggard, the voice of Florence itself awoke them ; for with the broadening day the bells of Giotto's tower began to ring the Angelus, filling the vibrating air with solemn melody, as one after another, from the iron throats of San Lorenzo, of San Michele, and of Santa Felicità came answering peals, while on the circling hills, gray with olive or dark with pine, the bells of convent and chapel and parish church echoed faintly, greeting each other with the angeli-

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

cal salutation. There were few artists who did not bow their heads and begin the day with the poetic orison, honoring "the Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" and what better prayer could there be for men whose chief care lay in the portrayal of that same flesh, and who were "to paint man, man, whatever the issue."

Early as it was, the city was astir, and the streets about the cathedral were thronged with people on their way to early mass; home-staying house-wives were gossiping on the doorsteps as in Dante's day; long-gowned burghers, like Filippo Strozzi, who built palaces, bought rare Greek manuscripts, and bribed royalty, were abroad for their marketing, to chaffer over a couple of fowls or a handful of vegetables. Groups of sun-burned peasants, in their gayest gear, among them a fresh-faced girl or two of the Nencia type, "white as cream-cheese and round as a little sausage," were crowding into the duomo to say a few aves before some favorite shrine; here and there, with ink-horn at his belt, a scholar passed — Pico or Poliziano — on his way to the Medici palace, or the still, green gardens of the Academy. Knots of leather-clad craftsmen, bare-armed cloth-dressers from the Calimala, silk-weavers bound for San Biagio, goldsmiths hurrying to their work in the Pellicceria, jostled each other in the narrow way. Here, too, were matrons of the old

## ITALIAN CITIES

school, austere wrapped in cloak and wimple, and blooming girls, whose pearl-wreathed hair and bare throats were hardly shaded by transparent veils, demurely conscious of the admiration they excited, and not averse to letting a young painter's eyes enjoy their comeliness. Had not Ginevra dei Benci, one of the proudest beauties of Florence, sat for Messer Domenico Bigordi? and he who would see the fair wife of Francesco Pugliese limned to the life need only visit the little church outside the walls, where Filippino painted her as Madonna. What pretty girl was not ambitious to figure in a fresco, or pose for a saint, tricked out with halo and symbol? When did adoration ever come amiss? or when was a bold glance and a fervently whispered "*bella*" really resented?

Meantime she who hoped some day to see her own portrait as Saint Catherine or Barbara or Lucy, behind the blazing altar-tapers, dimmed with the cloud of fragrant smoke, enjoyed a somewhat grosser incense. In this town of tiny streets and thickset houses, whose inhabitants had grown up together in close quarters, generation after generation; where family loves and hatreds were matters of heritage and tradition, and where each man was as well acquainted with his neighbor's affairs as with his own, none of these young ladies were unknown to their admirers, who could estimate each fair one's dower to a florin.

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

On the heads and hands of these pretty girls the passing goldsmith saw his own work in wreath and ring, and when the whole parti-colored crowd swayed and bent like a field of wind-swept irises as a priest and a hurrying acolyte passed with the *viaticum*, even while muttering a prayer for the soul about to pass away, he recognized with pride the silver pyx which had left his master's shop only a week ago. Perhaps it was hardly out of sight before the street began to resound with ringing hoofs and clashing steel, as a company bound on a mission to Siena, escorted by some thirty lances, clattered past; not so fast but that the workmen from Niccolò Caparrà's forges could salute its gallant young captain, whose fine armor, decorated with masques and lions' heads, was their own handiwork. As the soldiers jingled by, the high houses echoing their clangor tenfold, the sculptor modelling a Saint George for the armorers, looked long and wistfully after their leader, who rode with shoulders well-squared and pointed sollerets turned aggressively out, forcing the burghesses to flatten themselves against walls or to retreat incontinently under loggie, and reminding more than one of that roaring young spark of the Adimari, whose iron elbows and steel toes wrought such havoc on Dante's neighbors.

These vividly costumed people of the Renaissance have gone forever from the streets; they have

## ITALIAN CITIES

stepped into the gilded frames of altar-pieces, or faded into the frescoed walls of choir and cloister; they have climbed the palace-stairs and vanished into quiet galleries; they sleep in state in the canopied niches of Desiderio and Rossellino, and lie under the pictured stones of Santa Croce. But the background against which they moved is unaltered. The churches and palaces where painter and sculptor worked, the houses where they lodged, the shops where they sold and taught, the beautiful things they created are still there, and the palaces of Brunelleschi and Michelozzo and Benedetto are yet drawn up in line.

They bear a strange likeness to the mailed ancestors of their builders, these palaces, as they stand facing each other like duellists with a perpetual menace; holding high their blazoned shields, peering distrustfully through their grated windows, barred like the eyeholes of a helmet, thrusting out their torch-holders, defiant gauntlets, into the street, and flaunting their banners over the heads of the passers-by. The deep cornice shades their stern fronts like a hood drawn over a soldier's brows, and as the knight wore a scarf of brodered work or a collar wrought with jewelled shells and flowers over his steel corselet, each rugged façade is softened into beauty by sculptured shrine or gilded escutcheon, cunningly forged lamp-iron and bridle-ring. Into

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

the grim narrowness of each dark street had come some touch of color, some bit of exquisite ornament; and as the painter hurried to his shop in the morning, or strolled at evening with his lute, he could see on every side the work of some brother artist. Close at hand was Donatello's *stemma*, where the lion of the Martelli ramped upon his azure field; under heavy wreaths of pale-tinted fruit a Robbia Madonna gleamed whitely; the huge *fanale*, or torch-holder, at the corner, bristling with spikes like some tropical cactus, was forged by Nicholas the Bargain-Maker; the rough-hewn palace which darkened the slit of a street, Benedetto of Majano did not live to finish; that window-grating Michelangelo designed, bending the bars outward in beauty's service to hold the elbow cushion or the caged nightingale or the handful of spring flowers in their glazed pot of Faenza-ware; while behind the half-open iron-studded doors Michelozzo's columns rose between the orange-trees.

Who can over-estimate the artistic value of such environment; the unconscious training of the eye; the education of the perceptive faculties, the keen stimulus and the wholesome restraint exercised by the constant presence of a universally recognized standard of excellence? The art student might draw from the antique in the garden of San Marco, or copy the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel in good



## ITALIAN CITIES

company, with Michelangelo and Raphael at his elbow (running the risk of broken bones if he happened to be envied by the studio-bully Torrigiani), and under his master's orders might work up details in a panel, or even follow a cartoon, but the city itself was his real Academy.

All over this city the artists lodged and worked; the places still exist. There are dark arches where, in spite of perpetual twilight, masterpieces grew into being; and there are stairways of heavy gray stone that have been polished and channelled by the shoes of masters who lived long ago.

In the Melon Street (now Via Ricasoli) the memories thicken. There the long-gowned *trecentisti* have walked; Tafi, who set the solemn mosaic upon the dome of the Baptistery, and with him his roguish pupil, Buffalmacco, whose greatest works of art were his monumental practical jokes. Giotto, too, the chief of them all, caped and hooded as we see him in the Portico of the Uffizi, had come a little later to make the "house of the five lamps" trebly illustrious. The lamps are still on the house-front, glimmering above the little shrine where the old painters often stopped to tell their beads before the image of our Lady, who had been a good friend to their craft ever since the day she sat for its patron, Saint Luke.

Perhaps they passed on thence to that garden

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

of the Gaddi, in the little street not far away, to which the painter's pomegranate-trees gave the name of *Via del Melarancio*, which it wears even to-day. In the Calzaioli, just beyond the Bigallo, and on the same side with it, about a hundred years after Giotto, Donatello, and Michelozzo "worked together like brothers, perfecting the art of sculpture," carving that tomb of Pope John in the Baptistery, which was the forerunner of all the lovely, Tuscan-Renaissance tombal architecture. Later their mallets rang behind the cathedral at the corner of the Via dei Servi, while the minor music of goldsmith's hammer and niellist's tool was heard from the shops of Pollajuolo and Finiguerra, in the Vacchereccia. Monasteries there are too where famous artists once worked; convents where the sisters painted, like that Plautilla Nelli, who had to make Herods and Judases of the novices, since no man might penetrate the walls. The convents are secularized now, but we still find them in all quarters of the city.

Ghiberti cast his gates in the Via Sant' Egidio; to-day the house shelters the quaint foreign grace of Van der Veyden's Flemish Madonna, and geraniums now flame in the garden of the Via della Pergola, where Benvenuto's furnaces once glowed fiercely as the molten bronze became Perseus.

We visit Michelangelo the boy in the Via

## ITALIAN CITIES

Anguillara; Michelangelo the old man in the Via Ghibellina, and in Via Ginori are the stairs down which the young Raphael has often walked with his host. Andrea del Sarto, with Franciabigio, had his shop in that southern angle of the Piazza Or-San-Michele, where a dark vault gives entrance to a street so narrow that lovers might clasp hands across it from the windows corbelled out above, and where, too, the artists were next door to the palace of their arch-patrons, the merchants of the mighty guild of wool, with its blazon and loggia and battlemented parapet. Fra Bartolommeo got his nickname of Baccio della Porta from the Roman Gate near which he lived, and when later he took the tonsure and renounced his art for a time, his comrade, Albertinelli, discouraged by his loss, dropped palette and brushes and opened a wine-shop under those old houses of the Alighieri where "*nacque il divino poeta.*"

Il Rosso, with his apprentice Battistino and his ape (whom the chronicles leave nameless), made life merry for the monks of Santa Croce; Cellini, born near the modern iron markets and casting his bronze in the Street of the Bower, studied first with Bandini in the Furriers' Quarter, then, under the new dispensation of Duke Cosimo, went with the other goldsmiths to that Ponte Vecchio where the apprentice lads were stationed to offer trinkets to

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

the passing ladies, and to the same shop whence his bust now looks down upon his successors. So the tale runs, and the list is endless, for Florence remembers her famous men, and the archives beneath the picture gallery of the Uffizi are crammed with records that furnish us house, date, and name, dry bones to which the chroniclers add life, the life of the crowded, narrow-streeted city, with its art, its industry, its busy hours, its leisure, and even its fun and jokes.

For the hard-worked painters found time for the latter, made time for them indeed. Woe to the man who was conceited, credulous, or lazy; his foible was exploited by a dozen past-masters in the science of tormenting; Florentine tongues were proverbially sharp, and constant practice in the wordy warfare of the studio gave them an even finer edge.

The greatest artists — Donatello, Brunelleschi, and, earlier, Buffalmacco — concocted elaborate *beffe* and *burle*, with no pity for their victims. The temptation was great; the ages of faith had not passed away; many good folk, accustomed to believe in miracles, afforded golden opportunities to the practical joker; and if we may believe Sacchetti, Ser Giovanni, and Boccaccio, the wags were equal to the occasion. There was such a fund of credulity lying idle; it was so easy to make Calandrino

## ITALIAN CITIES

believe that he was invisible; to persuade the Doctor that he might sup with Helen and Cleopatra, and to convince Il Grasso that he had changed his identity, that we can hardly blame the painters for farces in which the whole town joined, even the good parish priest playing his part. This fun was rifest perhaps at the noonday hour, when Luigi Pulci takes us into that old market, around which the studios were thickest set, and which, not many years ago, stood just as it was when hungry industry, bent on dining, surged into the Mercato Vecchio.

Here artists, great and small, masters and apprentices, dined; here was dinner enough for all Florence; and the irregular square, round which the tall, soot-stained houses crowded, was a glutton's paradise, in which Margutte would have found all the articles of his credo: his tart and tartlet, his stuffed *beccafichi*, and his good wine. There were meals for all tastes and all purses; one could lunch on fruit and eggs and cheese with Donatello, or sup like a Magnifico on the boar that grinned from the butcher's shop, and only two days before was crunching the acorns of Vallombrosa. There was good eating in the grimy, black shops, where before a huge fire a spit revolved loaded with trussed fowls and haunches of venison; and the pastry-cook's was not to be despised with its deli-

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

cious scent of spices and warm pasties, just off the hot iron plates, set out in dainty white baskets; its *ciambelli* and *cialdoni*, buns and wafers; the crisp *berlingozzi* that poor Visino thought worth all the kings and queens in Hungary, and those light, golden, sugar-sprinkled pastykins which the Magnificent Lorenzo sang of. These delicacies were not for the apprentices; they brought their own empty flasks and canakins to the wine-shop, to be filled with white Trebbiano; they patronized the pork-butchers buying whole strings of sausages; the poulterers whose neighborhood gave the famous nickname of Pollajuolo, and where one student at least bought the caged wild birds and set them free, while onlookers wondered at the odd caprices of young Leonardo da Vinci.

Wine and bread, onions and sausages once consumed, whether before the shops or on the steps of Santa Maria in Campidoglio, the 'prentices went back to the *bottega*, which was usually in the massive basement of a tall house, fronting some tiny piazza or narrow street. The heavy, iron-barred shutters, which at night closed its four arches, were raised and fastened to the wall, and even the ponderous door stood open, for light was precious to the workers within. The lower half of these arched openings was filled by counters of solid masonry, to which a couple of seats were often

## ITALIAN CITIES

added on the outer side. Within, the furnishing was meagre enough; a few heavy joint stools, hacked by generations of students; a strong box; a delicately wrought pair of bronze scales for weighing pearls; gold, silver, and precious colors; a carved and gilded triptych frame hanging on the wall waiting to be filled with the patron saints of its future purchaser, and on one counter a small anvil, a goldsmith's hammer, graver, and pincers, and a goatskin bellows. A charcoal drawing or two was stuck on the wall; from a peg hung a fine jewelled girdle, and on a bracket over the door were some elaborately chiselled silver trenchers. At the back a door led into the studio, lighted from the next street, where the students worked under the master's supervision, drawing, painting, modelling, and carving.

The life of these art students was divided into three sharply defined stages. The child of eight or ten who was learning the rudiments of the craft was called an apprentice; the youth who aided in the execution of important commissions, an assistant (companion would be the literal translation of the Italian word); and the fully fledged young artist who had begun to fly alone, a *maestro*, or master. The whole training was eminently practical; there were no medals, no exhibitions, no public awards. Now and then there was a

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

great competition for some important civic monument, like the doors of the Baptistery or the façade of the cathedral, to which not only Italians, but artists from beyond the Alps were invited to send designs; but these were very rare, and by the end of the fifteenth century had practically ceased to exist. There were no academies; no public art schools and no government appropriations for artistic instruction; no official institutions, but the state, while "ignoring art in the abstract, encouraged the individual artist." To produce something which somebody would want to possess, to turn his knowledge of the beautiful, his mastery of technical processes to some concrete end, was the object of the education of the future artist, a work-a-day genius ignorant of our modern formula of art for art's sake. Pietro Vanucci painted the Florentines on altar-curtains, while waiting for the time when, as Perugino, he should work on the walls of the Sistine Chapel; Rodolfo Ghirlandajo "told sad stories of the death of kings" on the baldacchino draperies for All-Souls-Day; and Brunelleschi chased rings and set jewels while dreaming of antique temples and giant domes. Thus were executed not only the master-pieces we admire to-day in the churches and museums of Europe, but a whole series of minor works, which surround the pictures and statues of the Renais-



## ITALIAN CITIES

sance like the fantastical bordering about the illuminated pages of the missal.

Art did not mean the production of pictures and statues only; it meant a practical application of the knowledge of the beautiful to the needs of daily life. So the *bottega* hummed and buzzed with the manifold business of the artist. If orders came in his absence, the apprentices were to accept them all, even those for insignificant trifles; the master would furnish the design, and the pupil would execute, not from greed of gain, as with Perugino, but from the pure joy in creative work which made Ghirlandajo willing to decorate "hoops for women's baskets," and at the same time long for a commission "to paint the whole circuit of all the walls of Florence with stories," and which enabled him, although he died at the age of forty-nine, to leave behind him a second population of Florentines in the choirs and chapels of her churches.

There were constant opportunities for the exercise of this creative faculty. Orders did not cease. Now it was a group of brown Carmelites who called master and men to their church, to be at once scene-setters, costumers, carpenters, and machinists during the Ascension day ceremonies, and for the angel-filled scaffolding from which various sacred personages should mount to heaven. The Abbess of St. Catherine's came in state to order designs for

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

embroideries to lighten the heavy leisure of the nuns ; some wealthy merchant, just made purveyor of Florentine goods to the most Holy Father, would put the papal escutcheon on the cornice of his house, and wished to know what the master might demand for his drawing ; what for the *pietra serena* or marble ; what for the sculpture, where to the keys and tiara surmounting the arms of Rovere or Medici should be added, as supporters, some device of the painter's invention. Sometimes abbot or prior brought a great order for the decoration of a whole chapel or cloister, and the *bottega* palpitated with expectant enthusiasm, in spite of which the prudent master did not forget to specify in the contract that for the said sum he would furnish the paint, "except the gold and ultramarine," which must be supplied by the monks ; for the brethren dearly loved these costly colors, and the painter well knew that without this important clause he should have the prior always at his elbow demanding, "more and more of the blue." Even the imagination of a Pope Julius II., equal to the conception of a St. Peter's and of a mausoleum as big as a church, could not rise above the monastic tradition, and he could say, as he stood for the first time beneath the awful prophets and sibyls of the Sistine Chapel, "I don't see any gold in all this!"

Sometimes there would come an embassy in

## ITALIAN CITIES

gowns of state from some neighboring city, with armed guards and sealed parchments, bringing a commission for the painting of church or town-hall, or a foreign trader from Milan or Genoa would step in to haggle over a portrait. Most welcome was a bridal party, for its manifold needs gave work to the whole studio, even to the ten-year old apprentices in the back shop. "*Chi prende moglie vuol quattrini*" — he who takes a wife needs cash — runs the Florentine proverb, and we do not wonder at it when we realize what a quantity of fine things a bridegroom was expected to supply. There were the dower-chests, carved, gilded, and painted with "Triumphs" of love or chastity; then the shrine, with its picture of Madonna flanked by patron saints, for the bride's chamber, and if the *sposo* was inclined to do things handsomely, the painter could add the portraits of the future husband and wife in the inner side of the gilded shutters; a chased and enamelled holy-water basin, and sprinkler to hang beneath it, of course, and for the tiring mirror, just arrived from Venice, the master must design a silver frame. Then, while our hand was in, why not add a painted frieze of *puttini* on a blue ground to run between the wainscoting and the beamed ceiling? Next (for the list was a long one) came the *damigella's* book of Hours, wherein the tedium of

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

long prayers was pleasantly enlivened by the contemplation of goodly majuscules and fair miniatures. Important, too, was the plate, no small item in days when a comfit salver or a tankard was signed Verrocchio or Ghiberti. Then, objects of momentous interest and of anxious consultation to the whole party, came the jewels and their settings. The buyers brought the raw material with them, pearls and balas-rubies, the precious convoy of a Venetian galley fresh from the far East; a big turkis engraved with strange characters, torn from the neck of an Algerian pirate by a Genoese sailor, and an antique cameo unearthed in a Roman vineyard only a week before. Each jewel was then examined, weighed, and entered in two account-books, the painter's and the owner's, to prevent any possibility of fraud or mistake.

Afterward ensued a most animated and dramatic discussion of designs, details, and prices, during which artist and customers vied with each other in fine histrionic effects, followed in due time by an amicable settlement and more entries in those "diurnal books" which still exist among the domestic archives of Florentine families to inform posterity how many peacock feathers went to a garland, how many hundredweight of fine pearls to a girdle, and just how many florins, Macigni, Strozzi, or Bardi paid for a buckle or a pouch-clasp.

## ITALIAN CITIES

Strange as such varied orders would appear to a modern artist, they seemed natural enough to the painters and patrons of the Renaissance, to whom art meant, first of all, the embellishment of daily life. In these days of specialists and perfected processes, it is difficult to realize how wide a field was then open to the creative artist, and in how many different directions his personality sought expression. All life was his, and all its forms; nothing was too small or too great, too trivial to be tried, too difficult to be dared; in him the audacity of the revolutionist was united to the infinite patience of the gem-cutter. He attended personally to a thousand details now relegated to trained subordinates. He must answer for his materials, must dabble in the grave art of the apothecaries (that *arte degli speciali e medici* which called Dante member), that the chemicals might be pure for the color his apprentices ground. He must linger in the Pellicceria, or Furriers' Quarter, choosing fair, smooth vellum, and must anxiously test the panel upon which Madonna should appear, lest fine gold and costly ultramarine might be wasted upon unseasoned wood. He must train his model, watch the carving of his picture-frame, and see that the oil was properly clarified. The sculptor went to the quarries to select his blocks of marble, and superintended their removal to the town; he

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

examined the jewel on which cameo or intaglio was to be cut, and planned the scaffolding for his colossal statues. The architect arranged all the practical details for the execution of his designs, invented machines for raising stones and beams, built the bridges and platforms used by the workmen, was his own foreman and master-builder, and of him it might be truly said, "No stone was laid that he did not wish to see" (*Non sarebbe murata una pietra, che non l'avesse voluta vedere*).

The chisel, the needle, the compass, the burin, the brush, the goldsmith's hammer, the calligraph's pen, even the potter's clay and the mason's trowel were alike familiar to him. He could fill a dusky Gothic chapel with a frescoed paradise, radiant with golden heads and glimmering halos and the sweep of snowy wings, and fashion a woman's earring; he could design embroidery patterns "in chiaro-oscuro for certain nuns and other people;" and build a bridge over Arno that has stood for five centuries, against storm and flood, even when the river, swollen with rain and laden with wrack, tossed its tawny waves high against the piers and battered them with uprooted trees and clods of earth and broken beams. He could set a great cupola on the cathedral walls, and write abusive sonnets to those who declared he was tempting God by this achievement;

## ITALIAN CITIES

he could, on his way to Carrara to select marble for a monument, casually, and as an incident of his errand, survey and build a road over the torrent-beds and sharp spurs of the mountain; he could "cramp his hand to fill his lady's missal marge with flowerets;" he could design a cartoon for the tapestry-weavers, and crowd heaven's glories into a gilded triptych, as well as he could make scaling ladders and "armor warships." He could decorate a dower-chest, and paint a cathedral apse, and chisel a holy-water basin, while fortifying a city; he could write to a Duke of Milan, describing his inventions for war-machines, bombs, and field-pieces; his plans for fortifications, canals, and buildings, adding, as an after-thought, at the end of the list, "in painting also I can do what may be done as well as any, be he who he may."

He could handle a pen as well as a brush, and fill the empty mould of the sonnet with the fiery molten gold of real passion; he could write treatises on art, rich in wise precepts; histories of sculpture in which his own works were not slighted; dissertations on domestic economy and world-famous lives of fellow-craftsmen. Using the style like a chisel, carving character in broad, virile strokes, moulding colloquial Italian like wax, he could cast in the furnace of his own fierce nature an unequalled full-length portrait of the man of

## THE FLORENTINE ARTIST

the Renaissance, in "the best of modern autobiographies."

He could make scientific discoveries, solve mathematical problems, embroider an altar-cloth, invent costumes for a masque, summon the gods of Olympus to the magic circle of the seal ring, engrave buttons in niello, illustrate Dante's Paradise and Petrarch's Triumphs, design moulds for jellies and confections, model statuettes in sugar paste, and make of a banquet as rich a feast for the eye as for the palate. He could inlay a corselet, paint a banner for a procession with rose-crowned, peacock-winged angels and gaunt patron saints, or cast a huge church bell girdled with many patternings and Gothic letters which still tell us "*Franciscus Florentinus me fecit*;" he could paint and glaze a sweet water jar, or a cool-toned pavement, or a shrine where, under heavy garlands, the cherubs clustered close like doves in the shelter of the eaves, around some sweet-faced saint.

And in these myriad forms of loveliness he could immortalize his native town; freely as he scattered his riches over Italy, it was for Florence that he reserved his most precious gifts; it is to him, the greatest of her sons, that she owes her proud title of "*The Beautiful*." During long centuries of shame, when the foreign yoke lay heavy on her neck, the dead artists still served her; she



## ITALIAN CITIES

hid her misery and degradation under the splendid mantle of their consummate achievements, which still sanctifies her and will make her a place of pilgrimage as long as art has a single votary.

For creeds decay, and scholarship grows musty, and the wisdom of one century is the foolishness of the next, but beauty endures forever. A sceptical age smiles at the bigotry which condemned Matteo Palmieri's picture, and yet is charmed by the melancholy and mannered graces of Botticelli; the scholar shudders at the barbarisms of the famous humanists, but the sculptor still takes off his cap to Donatello; the mysticism of the Divine Comedy rings strangely hollow on a modern ear, but have the Night and Morning of Michelangelo no meaning for us? The scientist of to-day looks with reverent pity at Galileo's rude telescope, but the architect counts Brunelleschi's dome among the miracles of his art. Leonardo's fortifications have crumbled away; his inventions are superseded; only the drawings remain of the famous flying machine, but La Gioconda's mysterious smile has not ceased to fascinate an older world.

**IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA**



## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

IN the history of the arts and letters two cities have been leaders of nations, Athens and Florence, and two fountain-heads, the Ilyssus and the Arno, have poured their waters into the fields of the world. Ancient Athens is a ruin, but to-day the little city of Florence holds the thoughtful as does no other, even in Italy. It is not the past alone which makes it interesting; it is the fact that there we have the printed page and the record in stone side by side, that there more than anywhere else the historic souvenir stands visible and tangible.

In Egypt the temples rise from the sands that have covered the life of the people, and in Rome the skeleton of the antique world stands bare and gaunt upon a soil which is itself the dust of bygone civilizations; but in Florence the same walls which to-day resound to the traffic of the towns-people, and the polyglot enthusiasm of the tourists, echoed the talk of Dante and Guido Cavalcante; the arches that reverberate the loiterer's mandolin gave back the music of Squacialupi and the songs of Lorenzo the Magnificent as he "roamed the town o' nights" with his companions. The same windows which

## ITALIAN CITIES

see the English or American families starting with their little red books to do the city, saw the hooded Michelangelo stepping from his house in the Via Ghibellina, bending over the staff kept there to this day, and turning his face toward San Lorenzo, where his giants lay waiting for him to free them from their marble prison.

Paris has levelled her mediæval streets to build wide boulevards, and London's commerce has overlaid the ancient city; but in Florence you may go with Michelangelo to San Lorenzo by the self-same streets and turnings; you may follow the crowd trooping to hear Savonarola in the duomo; may pass the shops where immortal painters worked, and stand before shrines at street-corners famous in Florentine romance, where you walk hand in hand with Boccaccio and Sacchetti as easily as with Baedeker and Murray. Against the wall at your elbow the shoulders of some Ghibelline have been set hard, the stones rubbed by his mailed shirt. The great dint in the stone was made by the missile whirled from a mangonel upon some tower that still rises brown and solid as ever. "Magnificently stern and sombre are the streets of beautiful Florence," said Dickens, and hardly anyone has said better; but if her beauty be somewhat high and frowning, it lives with us the longer, and all about her she wears a garland of olive, well

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

fitted to the city which opened the path of modern thought.

The foreigners have loved Florence so much as to make her half their own. To the Tuscan the *forestieri* are as familiar as the Bargello itself, and it is no mean proof of the dignity and beauty of the city that the inevitable fringe of frippery which hangs upon the skirts of a tourist invasion cannot belittle her.

But it is not all frippery. No city has been more admirably photographed than Florence. The Tuscans are a reading people, or at any rate there are shops full of books, while Vieusseux's noble circulating library has hardly its equal. In it are histories of Florence, big and little, by famous men of by-gone centuries whose memorial tablets shine upon the city walls to-day: the Villani, whose house is in the Via de' Giraldi by the Bargello; Macchiavelli and Guicciardini, whose names you may see near the Pitti palace; Varchi and Nardi and many others; historians, partial and impartial, Piagnoni and Medicean.

But to those *forestieri* who speak our English language, no book in the long line has the fascination of the "Romola" of George Eliot. As in the words of Nello, Romola seems the lily of Florence incarnate against the brown background of the old city. Florence seems more familiar and akin to us !

## ITALIAN CITIES

because we can follow her footsteps about it, and see her between the great reformer and the Judas who betrayed them both, and attended by a whole Shakespearian train, — Nello, the barber; Bratti, the iron-monger; Brigida, the dear old simpleton; Tessa, the little sleepy, loving animal, and many others interwoven upon a background of the life and thought of the time.

A whole panorama is unrolled for us, made living by characters, some historic, some fictitious, but all penetrated with the spirit of the fifteenth century, and moving upon the great currents of the age, — the desire for civic autonomy, the striving for reform, and the passionate enthusiasm for the resurgent culture of antiquity. We listen to Savonarola in the duomo and to Capponi, speaking for liberty in the palace of the Via Larga. The life of the scholars passes before us in the intense earnestness of old Bardo, or the witty trifling of the Medicean plotters in the Rucellai gardens, and exhibits one of its most characteristic sides in the sayings of the brilliant smatterer, Nello. People famous in history meet us; some, like Piero di Cosimo, to take part in the story, others only to appear and disappear. Artists greet us for a moment, — wild young Mariotto Albertinelli, with his model, emerges into the light of festival-lamps upon the Annunziata place; his beloved friend, Fra Bartolommeo, stands in the glow

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

of the bonfire of vanities with Cronaca and Sandro Botticelli; young Niccolo Macchiavelli talks to us as only George Eliot could make him talk. Charles VIII. of France, whose almost monstrous face we find to-day in a terra-cotta of the Bargello, passes, — we see the slit of a mouth, and the “miserable leg” upon the housings of gold, and the expedition of the king to Naples, so heavy with consequences to Italy and the world, becomes an important factor in the story. We listen to the inevitable opponents of Savonarola and reform, — the artistic opponents, who sighed over the Boccaccios that burned upon the bonfire; the brutal opponents, in Dolfo Spini’s *compagnacci* and their hatred of all decency; the foolish opponents, in Monna Brigida’s thankfulness that the reformer had “not quite turned the world upside down,” since “there were jellies with the arms of the Albizzi and Acciajoli on them” at the Acciajoli wedding-feast. We stand upon the cathedral square — Piagnoni at heart, every one of us — through the author’s wonderful chapter upon the trial by fire. We starve with the city in its misfortunes, and rejoice in its success; we see the people of the frescoes, and we hear the bells of Florence.

Every visitor to Italy carries away at least a general impression of the city. It is an impression of brown, old stone, of narrow streets, of enormously



## ITALIAN CITIES

wide eaves, as if the palaces were shading their window-eyes from the dazzling light; of sidewalkless streets, with polygonal blocks of pavement, like an Etruscan wall laid flat; of fortifications and battlements, seen overhead; of massive gratings at windows that show the pediments of the Renaissance; of still heavier ones, at those of the Gothic times; of escutcheons at palace-angles; of projections corbelled out, throwing deep shadows and suggesting machicolations through which were dropped stones and beams in the days of street-battle; of shrines at corners, glassed and dusty now, but out of which the long-eyed saints of the fourteenth century look, wondering that the war-cries are gone and that only the street-cries remain; of shadowed streets, and at some opening a burst of sunlit façade of that checkered pattern, in black and white, so dear to mediæval Florentine eyes; while often and again, in semicircle of white and blue, Madonna with the baby, "ringed by a bowery, flowery angel brood," smiles upon one and says that if war is transitory, beauty is immortal.

Above all, one carries away in his memory the image of those buildings which are the outgrowth of the city, her stamp and mark, inseparable from her as the Arno, and as familiar to the eyes of modern travel as was the lily on the florin to the merchants upon every mediæval 'change of Europe. They

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

stand guard over the town like the stone saints at the doorway of a church: the Cathedral, a huge Christopher, lifting the cross upon the greatest of all domes; the fair Campanile, like a Gabriel of the Annunciation, wearing the lily of Florence, and calling "Ave Maria" from its peal of bells; and the Palazzo Vecchio, the Michael of the city, bearing the shields of the republic, summoning the townsmen to arms, and giving voice to the will of the people. Then, too, there are San Giovanni, where the Florentines are baptized, and Santa Croce, where the great are buried; the square strength of the Bargello and the slender Badia tower that rings the hour to the city.

All these make up Florence, and nearly all can be included within a small rectangle bounded on the south by the river, on the east by the Via dei Leoni and Via del Proconsolo running from the Arno to the Cathedral; the latter, with its vast length, and the Baptistery to the west of it, making a large part of the northern boundary, which is continued by the Via de' Cerretani to the western side, formed by the Via de' Rondinelli, Piazza degli Adimari, and Via Tornabuoni. Outside the rectangle historic quarters surround the great churches of Santa Croce on the northeast; San Lorenzo, the Annunziata, and San Marco, on the north; and Santa Maria Novella on the northwest. Besides

## ITALIAN CITIES

these, there is that part of Oltr'arno including the Via dei Bardi.

Within these limits, or nearly, the story of Romola runs, and about this little space you may follow it, not in its details,—since it returns frequently to the same places,—but in its main lines. You may wake up with Tito under the Loggia de' Cerchi and follow him to the Mercato, where he found the people anxiously commenting upon the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. The house of Romola's father in the Via dei Bardi may epitomize the life of the scholar, the festival of the nativity of Saint John give a glimpse of the artist, and with the scholar and the artist we have the great figures of the Renaissance,—the humanist who, from the heritage of antiquity, set forth again the inward worthiness and free agency of man, and the painter and sculptor who once more gave expression to his outward beauty. The scholars and artists of Florence may thus stand as sponsors for the Titos and Tessas, the Brattis and Nellos, and show us the palaces in which the people of "Romola" lived, the people themselves, as they were painted upon church-wall or carved on marble monuments. In the latter half of the story the interest and, with it, the train of characters converge upon the monastery of San Marco and the Piazza della Signoria, where the fortunes of the state work themselves out and the hopes of

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

Romola are shattered. The monks of to-day, however shorn of their old importance, take us into famous churches, and we may see the relics of Savonarola and follow his footsteps to the great square of the Palazzo Vecchio, where the story ends.

After the noble prologue, the book opens upon Tito awakening to the inquiring eyes of Bratti, the ironmonger, from his sleep under the Loggia dei Cerchi. The loggia is gone; but its place was in the heart of the city, where the high houses crowd together, and where the memorial tablets to the great departed speak of many who had gone from Florence before Tito's time, and of many who came after him. It is a busy quarter of narrow streets, where the procession had to close its ranks, and where Guelph or Ghibelline found a short chain quite long enough to link house to house and stop the oncoming horse or foot of the enemy. A roaring quarter it is where Dante heard the shouts of battle, and where Tito, had he listened, could have recognized the whole fugue of the arts of Florence, those famous *arti*, major and minor, — the shuttles of the woollen-makers, the chisels of the sculptors, the pounding of the metal-workers in the Ferravecchi street, the clicking hammers of the goldsmiths, and the cleavers of the butchers, their predecessors upon the Ponte Vecchio. \*

Only a few steps beyond the loggia lies the Mer-

## ITALIAN CITIES

cato Vecchio, that famous square which is still picturesque and busy (1887). The municipal broom has swept away the butchers' and poulterers' stalls, and much of that rather Augean market which old Pucci sang, and municipal prudence has housed in a museum the Robbia angels, that used to shine whitely over all the blood and dirt and confusion.

The Goddess of Plenty only a few years ago still stood there, high on her column, a kind of Santa Barbara to the tower of Or San Michele. For in early times, when the microcosmic republic not only furnished manufactures to the world, but made its own bread to feed its own soldiers, the captains of Or San Michele mounted the tower yearly and, looking out upon the fields, decided by their appearance what should be the current price of wheat. The goddess is gone, column and all, but plenty still reigns below in the market — and what a place it is! A wide rectangle, its centre unpaved; the houses, tall and short, crowded with windows, and below, about three sides of the piazza, a noisy, smoking, unfragrant medley of shops; a constant push and shouting; a crossing of handcars; a fizzing of spiders as the fat drips from *polenta* browning nicely and eaten hot, a crackling of charcoal under the chestnut braziers and open-air cooking of every sort and kind. If Tito, after his nap, had found but a *grosso* or so in his pocket, he would have taken

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

pretty Tessa's kiss and cup of milk as dessert and gone for his meal to one of those tempting *al fresco* cook-shops, with its large, clear fire, its rows of neatly dressed fowls and joints turning on their spits, the hot cakes of chestnut-flour and crisp slices of *polenta* fizzling in their pans, and its brass platters and porringers engraved with quaint old patterns, gleaming in the firelight. Here Tessa might find her *berlingozzi* to-day or Baldassarre his bread and meat; and we may see their modern counterparts—shabby men in long cloaks and slouched felt hats, pretty girls in serge dresses and gay headkerchiefs—see them best of all after nightfall, when the brazier-fires seem to leap up higher and make wild Rembrandt effects upon the faces of Bersaglieri munching *polenta* under their waving cocks' feathers, or brown peasants looking curiously at the rude woodcuts heading the penny ballads that line the walls. There is less "amateur fighting" on the square than in the old times, less filching from stalls, less gambling, for that is done decorously in the state lotteries. Of four churches at the angles, but two subsist in dirty, crazy fragments, and, indeed, there is perhaps less work for the devil whom Saint Peter Martyr saw fly by, as he preached in the open-air pulpit still remaining. The devil remains, too, for many years later a young French artist whom Florentines afterward learned to know as

## ITALIAN CITIES

John of Bologna, visited his friends and patrons, the Vecchiotti, near by, and catching the devil, fixed him to the angle of the palace, a grotesque, decorative little monster, for tourists to visit and Accarisi to copy on spoon-handles.

There are booths of every sort, full of gay goods ; shawls, red, blue, and apricot, the joy of modern Tensas ; booths full of animals, too ; here is a boy dragging hens from a basket, — one squeak, two squeaks, a whole demoniac panpipe of terror, till half a dozen hang downward by their legs. A little farther on, the parrots, in full consciousness of ornamental security, are shrieking what we feel sure are scurril taunts at the hens ; upon the shop-front are scores of wicker cages, their canaries filling high soprano parts in the chorus of the Mercato, while the thrash of a machine, hidden somewhere, adds to the noise till the big bell of the Campanile booms a diapason. You find Bratti at home just beyond the bird-shop, where the street of the Ferravacchi bristles with old iron. There are chains, bits of harness, copper braziers in whole families of big and little ; here and there among the metal are old musical instruments battered fiddles, a flute or so, and slender, verdigrised brass lamps.

The Medici lived hard by here before they outgrew their house and set Michelozzo to work upon the palace of the Via Larga. Their noses were not

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

nice ; one might be of the Grandi, and yet like a leek and rather enjoy the fish-market at the corner, whose loggia, with its arches, columns, and medallions, is a new-comer since the days of Bratti. And the Medici were not alone in the quarter: the Amieri were near them, and the Strozzi, surely as grandly housed as ever were private citizens, had built their huge palace here, with its back upon the "Onion Place," the Piazza dei Cipolli. Its bases are lined with the long stone seats so well known in Florence, so convenient for the sturdy constituents of the old nobles to stand upon of a *festa* to see the procession go by, to sit on of week-days, selling their onions and their spring flowers side by side.

Not far from the Mercato, in the Calimara, was the shop of Burchiello, that Renaissance Figaro of Florence, antecedent to the delightful character of Nello, the barber. It was Nello's shop that next received Tito and the story, and Tito looked out over the barber's saucer and apron at nearly what we see to-day. Some changes there have been, for Florence has worked hard at the façade of her cathedral, unveiling it this year, — some changes, but not many. The stone of Dante has been piously built into the wall, while Lapo and Brunelleschi are put on either side of it to watch their work. But the fair tower is the same ; "*il mio bel San Giovanni*" is *bello* still, even beside its later and greater rival. The mighty



## ITALIAN CITIES

dome rises as grand as when Michelangelo, his horse's head turned toward Rome, looked back at it from the hills, and avowed that he could do no better, grand under the sunlight, under the starlight; grand when, on some high festival, covered with lighted lamps, it sits like a jewelled mitre upon the city, and grandest of all, perhaps, under the Italian moon.

It was from the shop of Nello that Tito went with his Figaro patron to the house of old Bardo, in Oltr'arno.

The Via dei Bardi is still one of the most characteristic parts of the city. The houses of the Bardi are gone, but many such of the early times, those which must have immediately taken their place, remain. Among the frowning streets of Florence it is one of the sternest, chill and wind-swept: a long fortress, easily defended at its ends in the days when the great family, unaided, could send from its houses pikemen to hold the chain barricades of the Ponte Vecchio and the Piazza Mozzi; cross-bowmen to send their bolts whizzing from back windows into the enemy upon the bridges; artillerymen to work the mangonels upon the tower-tops, to fling great stones over Santa Felicità and up the Borgo San Jacopo, or even across the river to the heart of the republican city, the square of the Palazzo Vecchio. Not only could they fur-

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

nish all these and officer them with sons and brothers and cousins, but they had their allies, too. There were the Rossi, by the little church of Santa Felicità, and the Frescobaldi, to hold the bridge of the most holy Trinity. The bridge of the Frescobaldi has gone down in ruin before floods fiercer than these faction struggles, and has been replaced by the graceful arches of Ammanati, but the Ponte Vecchio, which saw the gonfalons of the quarters — the dove and the sun, the baptistery and the cross — beaten back by the Bardi, but finally triumphant, stands the same as ever, and says as steadfastly, "*Gaddi mi fece, il Ponte Vecchio sono,*" as in the days when the great Taddeo set its buttresses against the current.

To-day there are parts of the Via dei Bardi where one may stand and not see, within the gentle curve that bounds the vision, a single stone which tells of modern times or anything but arched windows, jealous gratings, and thick oak doors, heavy with the mass of spikes that stud them, a stern, forbidding street, but with the beauty of dignity, simplicity, and strength. There is little traffic there now; occasionally some fine carriage wakens the echoes of the deep archways as it goes by to the palace of the Capponi, whose name, great as that of the Bardi, illustrates the place still. The street which was "the filthy," the Via Pidigliosa, before the nobles

## ITALIAN CITIES

built their palaces there, can never be even commonplace again. And, stern as it is, romance looks down on one from the loggia whence Dianora dei Bardi saw and claimed her husband as they led him to execution, saving his life and the honor of the Buondelmonti. Robbia's Madonna, too, blossoms like a flower among the dark palaces, above the door of little Santa Lucia, the church in which Romola would have been married had not blind Bardo's memories and anticipations beckoned him to Santa Croce, where he had been wedded, and where he hoped to lie buried.

Midway of the Via dei Bardi a path leads sharply to the right, up the hill of San Giorgio, where Tessa lived, and finally to the mediæval gate, with its frescoes and its sculptured St. George. Beyond it opens the pleasant country, and at the side is the fortress where, in blue woollen and lacquer and pipe-clay, some thousand defenders of the modern Tessas of Florence may be seen.

From the crashing palaces of the Oltr'arno nobles, the cross-bolts and hurtling-stones of the battle of the bridges, to the wordy combats, the poison-tipped epigrams, the ponderously flung Latin taunts of the humanists, is as far as from the early fourteenth to the late fifteenth century; but topographically it is no farther than a ten minutes' walk from the Via dei Bardi to the palace of the Gherardeschi,

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

in the Borgo Pinti, where a tablet to Bartolommeo Scala reminds us less of the secretary of the republic than of the scene of the *culex* in "Romola," the suggestion of his quarrels with Politian.

It is, however, in the house of Romola's father that we are really made to participate in the enthusiasms of the man of letters. Bardo dei Bardi, the blind old scholar, the collector of books and antiquities, the compiler and copyist of manuscripts, is a familiar figure in the Italy of the fifteenth century, the age of learning.

When Bardo planned the great work that he and Tito were to write together, the first epoch of humanism, that of discovery, had passed away, and the second, that of compilation, had begun. In both Florence had been in the vanguard. She had welcomed the Greek professors from Byzantium, who came rouged and painted, and clad in stiff, hieratic robes, like the saints who stare down in mosaic from the walls of Ravenna. She had her own noble army of scholars: Boccaccio, Petrarch, whose mother was born in this Via dei Bardi; Poggio Fiorentino, who ransacked the transalpine monasteries for books, and found many an old Pagan author masquerading under frock and cowl, and others, too, who might say with Ciriaco, "I go to awaken the dead." And the dead was awakened. Antiquity rose to life again, wearing

## ITALIAN CITIES

a strange garb, and with her simple, white chiton pieced with bits of mediæval motley and bespangled with Byzantine tinsel; speaking a strange jargon of corrupt Greek and barbarous Latin, but ragged and stammering as she was, there was so much human dignity and so much divine beauty about her that no sooner was she seen than the new Helena won the heart of the mediæval student. A very Helena she was at first, seen dimly, as in a magic mirror; mute or capricious to those who sought most earnestly to learn her secrets; prone to evil, with a "feather-headed" moral lightness that frightened the devout, or so she seemed in the dim light of the convent library, but when brought into the Italian sunshine, the daylight of market-place and lecture-room, she lost this mysterious glamour, and gained in the losing.

All Florence welcomed her. The shop-keeping republic patronized learning more generously than king or pope: professors' chairs were endowed, libraries founded, and famous scholars employed as ambassadors and secretaries. In Florence, scholarship was not a mere ornamental fringe to the sober garment of daily duties; it was warp and woof of that garment, a part of life itself. Young girls, busy merchants, men of pleasure, captains of adventure, women of fashion, shared the enthusiasm for learning, and it is difficult nowadays to realize how

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

important the scholar's place became under such conditions. Women had their part in this feast of reason; Romola's education by Chalcondilas, her familiarity with Latin and Greek authors, was not uncommon. Italy abounded in learned ladies; princesses like Hippolita Sforza or Battista Montefeltro, who addressed Latin orations to popes and emperors; noble women who, like Cecilia Gonzaga, wrote Greek beautifully; female professors who filled many of the chairs of the Bolognese university; burghers' daughters, like Alessandra Scala, to whom Politian and Marullus paid court, and that Cassandra Fedeli, to whom Romola intended to apply when she left Florence after Tito's first treason. For humanism was not only an accomplishment, it was a career; in order to follow an ordinary conversation a certain modicum of culture was required, and a woman was obliged at least to read, the result being a certain robustness of intellect, which is so strong an element in Romola's character.

Save in his generous temper, Bardo is a typical scholar, with the maxims of the "Enchiridion" on his lips and an intense craving for fame in his heart; too proud to cringe and flatter, too noble to fawn for patronage and to pay its heavy price, and yet not proud enough to disdain what others gained through the sacrifice of their independence, and

## ITALIAN CITIES

too often of their self-respect. But Bardo's wish that through his collections his name should be known and honored was not unreasonable in an age that revered the tomb of Petrarch like that of a saint, that preserved the study of Accursius as though it were holy ground, and in which some enthusiast, taking the lamp from below the crucifix and placing it before a bust of Dante, exclaimed, "Take it; thou art more worthy of it than the Crucified!"

Modern Italy is at present quite too busy with financial and economic problems to be enthusiastic about literature, but we can still hear lectures on Dante in the Florentine Collegio Reale, and see students almost as picturesquely cloaked as in the old days when Boccaccio discoursed in San Stefano on the same subject. A few years ago a lineal descendant of the great scholars might be seen in the person of the Marchese Gino Capponi, author of the well-known history of Florence.

From the scholar's library, in which antiquity was diligently studied in manuscript and inscription, the story leads Tito to one of those street processions which, partly religious, partly civic, were also largely, in their costume and arrangement, the outcome of these very excursions into the ancient authors, and no picture of Italian life in the fifteenth century would have been complete without

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

the suggestion which George Eliot gives of the festival of Saint John's nativity. He is a famous saint in Florence, and his is the oldest church, the Baptistery, already old in the thirteenth century, when Arnolfo covered it with the black-and-white pattern which we see there now, and which must have been still tolerably fresh when Nello's barber-shop stood near it. Neither the wide interior of the Duomo nor the many-chapelled Santa Croce is as solemn as the incense-filled space of San Giovanni, whose domed ceiling, as the eyes strain through the darkness, gradually grows populous with a multitude, amidst which the face of the colossal Christ looks out and seems to vibrate upon the colored gloom. The church is so old that it is quite doubtful whether the Romans did or did not found it, and its pavement has been trod by generations of famous Florentines and by famous guests of Florence, kings and emperors from the north, weavers of Lucca learning those same pavement patterns by heart for their webs, and tourist invaders with their guide-books. The saint is popular outside of his church, too; you find him on all sides. The young Saint John is the darling of the Robbia and of the angel painters, the Lippi and Botticelli. Rossellino has set him up in marble, a tottering baby, over the door of the Opera del Battistero; and he is the beloved of Donatello, who "did" him again and



## ITALIAN CITIES

again as an adolescent with thin cheeks and wide eyes standing to-day among the sturdy Davids and Cupids of the Bargello. The John Baptist of the procession was, as George Eliot tells us, no such lovely boy, but a rough *contadino*, glad of his basket of bread and wine, which was let down to him from a house on the square of tiny Santa Maria del Campo still standing halfway along the Proconsolo Street. Every city in Italy had, if not its Saint John's feast, some other, but the Florentines led as in other directions, for with their "Orfeo" of Politian, their music of Squarcialupi, their garden concerts with recitations, they were preparing the way for the opera and the modern theatre.

The popularity of pageants in the churches and streets was immense. After the allegories of Dante, the "Triumphs" of Love and Fame and Chastity of Petrarch, the greatest artists could not disdain the setting and even the stage-carpentry of the pompous ballet-spectacles in which kings of Scripture, heroes of antiquity, the virtues and vices, elements and attributes, marched and countermarched through the cities of Italy. In the mysteries of the North the missal borders of the middle ages had come to life, with all their soldiers and saints, their devils and dragons; but the Italians, that people of artists, added the myths of classical antiquity and interwove their Bible with Ovid. Brunelleschi set

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

his copper spheres a-whirling and invented his heaven of angels dancing in concentric rings, his Gabriel lowered by pulleys from a star; Donatello built his colossal wooden horse for a Paduan pageant, and Leonardo da Vinci superintended the festivals at Milan.

The charming half-feminine soldier-saints and heroes of Perugino in the Sala del Cambio of his native city might be seen in their fantastic feathers, their semi-Roman costumes, upon the squares of Perugia, in moralities and plays. The women of Botticelli and Pollajuolo who with corseleted breasts and drawn swords sit as Fortitude and Justice in the Uffizi, passed throned upon the processional chariots of Cecca. Mantegna's slender nymphs filled the car of Venus, while the Theology and Jurisprudence of Raphael's Vatican ceiling were not wanting.

The Florentines made a profession of organizing festivals, and went about Italy as *impresari*; while the whole youth of the country, men and women, took various parts, from merely walking in gay procession, as in the painting of the Adimari marriage on the famous dower chest, to filling the most eccentric rôles. They sat on the tops of high columns, stood whitened as statues in niches, or even descended perilously upon a rope from some church façade; while every writer tells of those historic

## ITALIAN CITIES

little boys who were gilded all over, and who are variously stated to have died from the effect of, and not to have been injured at all by, the gold leaf. The *naïf* simplicity of the early mysteries played on a platform in church or refectory must have embodied much that was lovely; but as the morality grew into favor, the personifications of various attributes became more and more enigmatical, till the plays were perambulating puzzles, set in accordance with the overloaded fashions of the North. In Italy culture had permeated a deeper and wider stratum. The antique was already a tradition, and men knew their Dante and Petrarch, Boiardo and Pulci, by heart. Excrescences were pruned away; mere richness gave place to form and taste. The pompous prosing Victor Hugo presents so vividly in the beginning of his "*Notre Dame de Paris*" was succeeded by epigrammatic verse or even the fine poetry of Politian. Doubtless there lingered some absurdities in these pageants, as when tumblers and weight-lifters were seen at the same time with the angels, or a ballet issued from the sides of a golden wolf at Siena; indeed, Donatello's wooden horse of Padua and Leonardo's equestrian statue of Ludovico Sforza, performing mechanical evolutions at a festival, partook of the same exaggerated taste. But we may be sure that the pictures were fine when Brunelleschi and Da Vinci stood by; and if the painters

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

costumed and set the spectacles, the spectacles in their turn reacted upon the painter's art.

Imagine how ardently Mantegna and Filippino Lippi would have worked at the arrangement of a procession; how Filippino would have expended upon it the vivid fancy which Vasari tells us of, and which he showed in the curiously devised trophies, standards, and pseudo-Roman architecture of the Strozzi chapel in Santa Maria Novella. If Ghirlandajo looked hard at the Florentines when about their daily avocations, Sandro Botticelli was all eyes as the car of the Virtues passed, and we can well believe that the pretty girls of the city vied with each other to be chosen for this or that personification. We see the sublimated reflection of these spectacles on many a canvas or bas-relief of the fifteenth century: in Botticelli's exquisite "Primavera;" in Mantegna's "Triumph of Cæsar" at Hampton Court; in the singing groups of Della Robbia; the intertwined boys of the pulpit at Prato, and the panels, pilasters, and friezes of the Renaissance. So great was the passion for spectacles that Savonarola was forced to adapt it to the uses of his theocracy; and in speaking to the multitude from the pulpit of the Duomo, he clothed his vision of Christ in the forms which the people had seen and understood in the processions and pageants of the streets. Perhaps, too, the great monk never entirely forgot

## ITALIAN CITIES

the days when he laid down the lute in his native Ferrara, the city of festivals.

Peculiarly famous in the arrangement of pageants was that Piero di Cosimo who represents the artistic side in Romola, and who evidently was chosen by George Eliot for his strong personality rather than for his place in Italian art.

Far inferior in technique to most of his fellows, his eccentricities, as has been the case with some other painters, gave him more fame than his talent. Vasari's sketch of his life reads like a character study, and George Eliot closely followed his lines. A few souvenirs of the old painter are still to be found in Florence; the old Via Gualfonda, then in the most lonely part of the town, is now one of the great arteries of modern Florence, running from the piazza of Italian independence to the avenue of Filippi Strozzi, behind the Dominion church of Santa Maria Novella, past the railway-station. Here the painter shut himself up in his studio, living on hard-boiled eggs, which, to save time and firing, he would cook by fifties and hundreds; never allowing his rooms to be cleaned or his garden pruned; saying that such things were much better left to nature; stuffing his ears with wool to drown the sound of the bells, the voices of the street, and even the distant chanting of the monks, and "living the life of a wild beast rather than a man."

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

A painter of lively fancy rather than imaginative power, with more love of the grotesque than the beautiful, he studied the caprices of nature. The forms of strange plants and animals; the fantastic shapes of the clouds, and even the mildew stains upon old walls, delighted him, "and he would describe them so frequently that even to persons who could take pleasure in such narratives, the relation at length became tedious and tiresome." This is a significant sentence when we remember that Vasari's authority was his own master, Andrea del Sarto, a pupil of Piero. Readers of "Romola" will remember the sketches of loves playing with armor, the white rabbit that twitched its nose contentedly over a box of bran, and the tame pigeons that Tito saw in the old man's den, and they can still be seen in the picture of "Mars and Venus" in the Nerli Palace.

The Piero of the novel is a type as well as a personality, a type of the artistic nature that found the pageantry and color of Lorenzo's time more attractive than the severity of a Savonarola. Piero's dislike of Savonarola was that of a great many people not of the Dolfo Spini sort, who, looking only at the surface of things, preferred a prince who made life very pleasant for the few, rather than the priest who would make it tolerable to the many. Piero, whose business was to look at the

## ITALIAN CITIES

surface of things, naturally hated a man who wanted "to burn all the color out of life;" "to make every woman a black patch against the sky," and to do away with the gold brocades and velvet mantles, the *giostre* and *cavalcate*, which paint so magnificently. Van Dyck could hardly be expected to sympathize with the Puritans, and an enlightened and art-loving tyrant is a better patron than a capricious republic. There were Piagnoni painters, men who saw the surface of things, or at least could render it on canvas far better than Piero, who at the same time could see somewhat below that same superficies, and long for beauty of a more immaterial and nobler sort, like Botticelli and the young Michelangelo, but Piero was not of their ilk.

The famous families of Florence were long-lived. To-day in the Martelli Palace you visit the statues which Donatello gave to a Martelli of the fifteenth century; it is by the courtesy of a Buonarrotti that the relics in the house of Michelangelo are shown; the Strozzi, the Pazzi, and many others are seen daily about the streets of the city; and in Santa Croce, the tomb of a Capponi—a Gino Capponi, like his great ancestor—is white and shining in the marble of a recent date.

The private palaces of Florence are as characteristic as its public buildings. They are the outcome

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

of civil strife, and through all the elegance of the Renaissance appears the fortress. Within the windows are the gratings that made scaling-ladders useless; below are doors which little save fire or a battering-ram could force, and above is the loggia, raised upon the house-top, beyond the chances of street-battle. They are such houses as the one Romola lived in; without they suggest the fortress, and within they smack of the cloister, with their long passages, tiled floors, frequent stairs, and wide, frescoed wall-spaces.

The tall towers are gone from these private palaces. A fiat, issuing like a mediæval Tarquin from the Signoria, lopped them to an even level in the thirteenth century; but the escutcheon, carved by some famous artist, still advertises the nobility of the former owner, who is often seen within, kneeling before Madonna upon a gold ground; his palms joined, and his subtle Florentine profile upturned with reverential if somewhat proprietary interest. In the Borgo degli Albizzi the palaces stand shoulder to shoulder, Neri and Pazzi, Alessandri and Quaratesi; for half the streets of Florence are named for the great families. They have held history and romance, tragedies of blows in the earlier centuries, of poison in the later, and have sheltered the kindly family life Pandolfini tells of in his "Del Governo."



## ITALIAN CITIES

The finest palace streets of Florence are the Borgo degli Albizzi and the Via Tornabuoni. The Borgo almost retains its old appearance, but the Tornabuoni has been given up to the foreigner, especially to the English or American visitor. Thither he goes for his letters and his money; there he reads the papers at Vieusseux's, or loiters in Doney's café; there, in the shadow of the stern-looking palace, designed by Michelangelo, he may buy photographs of everything, big or little, in Florence; there the tourists sit and study their guide-books, in Baccio d'Agnolo's windows of the Hôtel du Nord. It is the oddest mixture in the city of the old and the new. Before the huge Strozzi, and opposite the flower-market, at Giacosa's, the American and English girls eat candy or sweets, according to their nationality; or just beyond, under Alfieri's house, look into the windows of the jewellers' shops, discussing whether the devil of the Mercato Vecchio or the St. George of Donatello is better upon a spoon-handle; whether a bearded head or an athlete will please the longer upon an intaglio or cameo; whether photographs are better mounted upon tinted paper or white; in fact, discussing the thousand delightful trifles of foreign travel, and of present-buying for those at home.

Not a few Americans have had close acquaintance with the house in which George Eliot passed the

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

days when she was acquiring that exact knowledge of Florentine topography which helps to make her book so real. This was the villa of Mr. Thomas Adolphus Trollope, which stood well out in the country, but since then Florence has grown; it is now within the city, and has become a pension. It is a privilege to remember it as it was, with its wealth of carving and Venetian glass, and its fine oak-floored and leather-covered library, where the genial old author proudly dragged from his shelves folio after folio of the early Florentine historians, manuscript and black-letter, and showed them by the light of a stained-glass casement, which filled the whole end of the room and framed Fiesole with its rocks, its olives, and its towers.

If the palaces of the old Florentines are to be found on all sides, so, too, their ancient inhabitants stand ready to receive us, if we will but go to them. Thanks to the painters, the costume of the end of the fifteenth century can be reconstructed even to its smallest details, and we know just how Tito looked when he thrust his thumbs into his belt or cast the *becchetto* over his left shoulder, and can find all Brigida's finery, from her pearl-embroidered cap to her coral rosary, in many a blackened picture. For even if costume was idealized and ennobled by the artists under the influence of classical antiquity, the innumerable portraits of the time represent it

## ITALIAN CITIES

as it was worn in daily life. The young Florentines might clothe themselves in Mantegna's or Gozzoli's draperies for a May-day festival or procession, but when they sat to Ghirlandajo or Botticelli for their portraits, they wore the mantle and kirtle or the doublet and hose of the latest mode.

The most marked characteristics of this costume are simplicity of line, unity of color, and sobriety of ornament. Florentine elegance always had a touch of severity. The silk brocades made in the town, and sent to France and England, were seldom seen at home. Except on festival days, the Florentines wore their own woollen stuffs from the shops of the Calimara. The general form of these garments is familiar to us all: the fine-linen underwear, showing at wrist and throat, or pulled through the slashes at elbow and shoulder; for the young men, the long hose, fastened by points at the waist to the tight-fitting jerkin; the loose doublet, falling half-way to the knee; the ample cloak, still worn in Florence, and the tiny red cap, crowning a mass of fuzzy curls. For the girls there were the close-fitting gowns that revealed every line of the body; the flowing over-robe, shaped like a Greek tunic, sometimes girdled in antique fashion; a chaplet of goldsmith's work or a net of pearls to confine the long hair. For the elder folk there was the stately *lucco* that fell in unbroken folds from neck to

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

ankle; the great mantle lined with furs or velvet; the *barret* with its hanging scarf, ample protection against the sharp *tramontana* or the hot sun; grand gowns of rich, heavy stuffs and all sorts of head and neck gear, from the transparent gauzes of Fra Lippo's pictures to the thick veils of the Del Sarto Madonnas, all most becoming to elderly faces.

In Italy the old canons of proportion were never quite forgotten. The waist and hips were never compressed, and the head was dressed so as to appear relatively small. The huge head-dresses, the towering horns and peaks, so popular in England and Germany, the pinched waist and squeezed hips of the French *demoiselle* and *châtelaine*, never found favor in Italy. The mantle, the cloak, the flowing veil, were essential parts of an Italian toilet of any epoch, and even in the eighteenth century Venetian women could still be majestic in hoops and panniers.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century the study of antique sculpture, the influence of the artists, the newly awakened sense of æsthetic criticism, began to find expression in costume. The proportions of the human body, the beauty of its movements, the elegance of its natural lines, were again felt, after many centuries, and since the days of *peplos* and *himation* they had not been more fully expressed. Beautiful as the garments of ancient

## ITALIAN CITIES

Greece were, the Florentines were too truly artistic, too thoroughly imbued with the principles of style, to endeavor to imitate them. No doubt artists and patrons looked upon antique drapery as an ideal, but as something quite unsuited to modern conditions, to a cold climate, to the activity of burgher life.

But the youths' doublet and hose, the girls' tight-fitting, square-cut bodice, followed the lines of their young bodies, and the older people wore the long folds and ample draperies that lend grace and dignity to the most uncomely. On the practical character of these costumes, their fitness, their style, in a word, we need not insist. They were as fine in detail as in line. Here, as in every other aspect of Renaissance life, there was much personality; ornament was individual; seals, emblems, arms, devices, the blazons of mediæval heraldry, were still in the immediate past, and to them the artists lent beauty as well. So the girl's favorite flower blossomed unfading in her silver garland; the scholar's pet maxim, from Seneca or Cicero, was embroidered on his pouch or graven on a medallion, and charming trifles lent grace and originality to the simplest dress.

The burgher's suit of plain cloth could not fail of distinction when the medal in his cap was wrought by Pisanello or Finiguerra, its device penned by Politian, and when the seal-ring on his finger was

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

cut by some famous *intagliatore*, ancient or modern. There were fewer silks and velvets in the brown town than in Venice or Milan. A Florentine never loved a silk *simarre* or a pearl necklace as he did a fine cameo or a good bit of goldsmith's work, but of the latter he showed a generous appreciation. On the girdle, the pouch-clasp, the dagger-hilt, the garland, cunning workmanship and artistic fancy were lavished. Pretty things were not made by the gross then, and each was a separate creation of the artist. The shops of Cennini, the Ghirlandaji, and the Pollajuoli were full of young students capable of giving shape to any number of dainty conceits in gold, silver, or *niello*. The art or trade of the goldsmith was most honorable; it counted among its members the greatest of Florentine artists. Was not Bigordi always the garland-maker, and did not Brunelleschi set jewels before he set the great jewel on the walls of Santa Maria? We can find Tito's dagger, and Romola's golden girdle, and Tessa's silver necklace and clasp, under glass in the museum, and we can see Tito's mail-shirt in the armory of the Bargello; but time, cruel as Savonarola's bonfire, has devoured most of our actors' properties, and only bits and shreds would remain to us if the painters, the Florentine "fifth element," had not preserved them for us, and they show us not only the costumes, but the actors themselves.

## ITALIAN CITIES

At this time the artists were passing through the realistic phase of their art; had abandoned the well-ordered, symmetrically arranged heaven and hell of the Giotteschi, and were carving and painting men and things as they saw them in the every-day world about them. With their help it is an easy task to evoke the past: every palace becomes haunted, every street crowded with familiar figures; at every corner we meet some well-known face; the old Florentines return to their old places. The most indifferent traveller cannot help seeing them, be he ever so blind.

If we take some of these characters of "Romola" and look for their counterparts in another art, with a little patience we shall find them all. Ghirlandajo will show us many of them, he who, if he did not paint the walls of Florence, as he wished, portrayed the world that moved within those walls. In the choir of Santa Maria Novella the artist painted the stories of the blessed Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, but he has taken his pictures from contemporary life; he has painted his friends and neighbors, not idealized into cold abstractions, but real men and women with keen, subtle faces, acute and critical, yet not unkindly, sharpened by shop-keeping and the *tramontana*, but ennobled by wide culture and capable of kindling into enthusiasm. Many of them are ugly in line and modelling, bony and flaccid at

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

once, with an occasional quite abnormal development of cheeks and chin. But character can do much to beautify the most ill-favored. Each of these figures is a definite personality, clearly and distinctly marked, invaluable to the student of history, with no softening of lines or angles, a portrait straight from life. Here we are face to face with the old Florentines. ✕

On the right is a group of humanists: Politian, "whose juvenile ugliness was not less signal than his precocious scholarship;" Marsilio Ficino, brought up as a Platonist from his cradle, "and whose mind was, perhaps, a little pulpy from that too exclusive diet," both spare and small, with pale faces; Cristoforo Landino, white-haired and worn, in black gown and *barret*. Behind them, among a group of grave, gray-haired men, is a figure handsome and majestic enough for Romola's godfather, Bernardo del Nero. On the panel directly opposite is Tito, known in Florence as *Il Bello*, in dark mantle and red cap, looking at us over his shoulder out of long brown eyes; here, too,—a genuine portrait,—is the massive strength of Niccolò Caparrà. On the left a dark, bald man, in a plain russet suit, suggests Baldassarre; and one shrewd face, with a humorous twinkle in the keen eyes, must be Nello's; while near by is another actor in our drama, young Lorenzo Tornabuoni, then in the Medicean bank.



## ITALIAN CITIES

For the peasants and some of the older folk, pretty Tessa, meek, deaf Monna Lisa, bargaining Bratti, and silly Brigida, we must go to Fra Filippo Lippi, who was not afraid to paint very commonplace sinners as saints, little rustics as Madonnas, and the street-urchins of Florence as boy-angels and blessed *bambini*.

In the Bargello we find the strange head of Charles VIII., ugliest of knight-errants, and the bust of Macchiavelli, no longer the witty young secretary of the republic, but the saturnine author of "The Prince," worn and embittered by poverty, disappointment, and the sad necessity of serving those "Signori Medici."

In the cloister of the Badia is a plain sarcophagus, surmounted by a bust, the tomb of Francesco Valori, the fiery partisan of Savonarola; the massive features and long, straight hair remind one of those Puritans and Covenanters with whom the Piagnone had much in common. Little Lillo and Ninna, and Savonarola's white-robed, olive-crowned *angiolini*, we see again and again, for the beauty of babyhood was first discovered and translated into form by the artists of the Renaissance. The portraits of Savonarola are too well known to every tourist to require note or comment. One never tries to find Romola herself; we see her, as did her blind old father, only as something vague and shining.

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

The November holiday of 1494, with its ugly ending for Tito, sent him to Niccolò Caparrà to buy his mail-shirt, "the garment of fear." There is a restaurant now at Niccolò's street-corner, but under a house massive and picturesque enough to justify the tablet to the memory of the old armor-maker. Tito found Caparrà forging spear-heads; and soon after his prophetic anticipation was justified by the entrance of Charles VIII. of France, whose short occupation of Florence enabled Tito to sell the library, betray the sacred trust of Bardo, and alienate Romola.

The long hall of the Medici, now Riccardi Palace, upon the Via Cavour, in which Capponi tore the treaty, — saying, "Then if you blow your trumpets, we will ring our bells," — is greatly changed, and suggests the flute and violin, not the trumpet. There are rows of mirrors in rococo frames with Cupids painted on them, and the long-arched ceiling has been splashed by Luca fa Presto with an Olympus of gods and goddesses. Not far from the palace is the gorgeous church of the Santissima Annunziata, between whose square and the hill of San Giorgio, Tessa, in the intervals of her many naps, played her poor little *rôle*. There the lamps, which swing in a constellation of gold and silver, yield a "yellow splendor in itself something supernatural and heavenly to the peasant-women." A heaven of

## ITALIAN CITIES

gilding and light and rich colors and sounds surrounds them; at once their drama, their picture-gallery, and their church; an epitome of their hopes and fears, and the vague wonder which is their nearest approach to an appreciation of the beautiful.

The lamps have been wonderful to thousands of Tessas since the evening she brought her cocoons there and, kneeling, looked at the handsome Saint Michael and thought of Tito. To-day you may see peasant-women, sad-faced and worn, as naïve and simple and dull as Tessa, if not as pretty, passing under the often-proclaimed *Guibbileo* of its doors, kissing the silver altar-front again and again and bowing to the dark face of Andrea's Christ, looking out from the splendor. Tessa is perhaps the only character in the book who is the same to-day as in the fifteenth century. Outward events make no impression upon a mind too shallow to take account of them, and the little Tuscan model from some *castello* of the surrounding hills, who sits to-day for the Florentine artist, is as little affected by the facts of United Italy and Roma Capitale as was Tessa by the entrance of the French or the war with Pisa.

The story takes us onward to the Medicean plotters in the Rucellai gardens, and their world is changed indeed. The gardens are beautiful still, with ilex and cypress and olive; but conspiracy with epigram and lute and critical admiration of

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

antique gems, diplomacy which conferred its highest honors upon the orator's Latinity, are as far removed from us as the peacock roasted in its feathers.

After Tito foils the attempt of his foster-father in the gardens, he is counterfoiled in turn by Romola in his own attempt to deliver Savonarola into the hands of Dolfo Spini. For a time the reformer is still in the ascendant, and we have the charming pictures of the "angelic boys," whose descent upon Tessa, and temporary conversion of Monna Brigida, brighten the latter part of the story. But tragedy soon meets us again in the Bargello. Nowhere in Florence is the contrast between the past and the present more marked than in the Bargello, that older brother of the Palazzo Vecchio, once a place of punishment and torture, the headquarters of the *podestà*, or military governor of the city. Grim memories cling about its massive walls; it has stood sieges, held patriots and traitors, sheltered tyrants, and seen blood flow in execution, massacre, and revolt; stone cells line the court and lead out of the great halls; in the council-chamber, now an armory, is the trap-door of the ancient *oubliette*, once filled with human bones, and the scaffold stood in the centre of the famous court, which has been little changed since Romola climbed the lion-guarded staircase to look her last upon her godfather. Kindly time has washed away the blood-stains and

## ITALIAN CITIES

the painted traitors, hanging head downwards from its walls; the stone escutcheons and lambrequined helmets of the old podestàs still remain; but instead of the agonized crowd that then filled the loggia, there is now a row of church-bells, graven with words of peace and blessing; in the chambers where the torturer handled his tools, Robbia's Madonnas smile upon us; and in the chapel, where the condemned received the last sacraments, Florence found her poet, a young Dante, unembittered by exile. Only the armory on the ground-floor and Pollajuolo's condottiere recall the sterner uses of the old palace.

The monks of Florence, whose predecessors bore the statue of the Impruneta, and opposed or supported Savonarola, have fallen upon evil days, but they nurse their antique glories, and still go, picturesque figures, about the streets. Once their churches were so many ecclesiastical strongholds, each brotherhood proud of its traditions and names; the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella boasting their Madonna of Cimabue and their frescoes of Ghirlandajo; the Augustinians of Santo Spirito, proud of their culture; the Carmelites, of their famous brother, Filippo Lippi, and their Brancacci chapel, that artistic sanctuary of the Renaissance where Michael Angelo and Raphael looked and learned; the Dominicans of San Marco pointing to their Angelic Brother, and to Fra Bartolommeo; the

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

Franciscans, proud of their poverty and of their magnificent church, and all prouder still of their importance in the ecclesiastical body, their relics, and their places in the processions of the town. To-day their pride has passed away, and even their proprietary interest in their art-treasures is sadly diminished. San Marco has gone forever from its monks, and the tourist pays his franc to see the Angelicos and visit the cell of the great reformer; Santa Croce is to be secularized as a Pantheon to the dead Florentines and the Carmine is but a parish church. But at least their frescoes all remain *in situ*, and cannot easily be dragged from their places to a gallery, a fortunate circumstance.

The brothers of the friars' churches are more interesting than the priests of the parochial ones, particularly those of Santa Maria Novella, which has kept some of its monks and all of its art-treasures. The mantle of Saint Dominic has descended but lightly upon the shoulders of these good fellows, and even his sombre souvenir cannot darken their smiling faces. The memories of Savonarola, of the saintly Bishop Antonino's works of mercy, and of the angelic monk of Fiesole have come between. There is little of Fra Angelico's poetry in them, but they are gentle and kind to the poor, and a namesake of the saint-bishop Fra Antonino, under his black hood over the white mantle, was a really

## ITALIAN CITIES

startling reminder of the greatest man of his great order; a coincidence to watch and study, with the beetling brows, the deep-set, bright eyes, the thick nose, full lips, and heavy jaw of Savonarola in Bartolommeo's portrait; the fierce frown and sweet smile the chroniclers tell us of. We were bidden by him to be quite at home and paint at ease, with the assurance that nobody was disturbed.

The sacristy was a little church-world, and gradually one learned to take an intelligent interest in it. Peasants and city poor entered for consolation in heavy sorrow, and for the smallest gossip of daily life. On some days there came a mighty shuffling, echoing along the passages, and a flood of the personally conducted burst into sight, inundating everything till one seized the canvas by its top, and the easel by its legs, to preserve them; while the tourists climbed steps, read their books, studied the backs of monuments, for the recondite always appealed to them, and formed their ideas to quick music. A sketch was always tempting to them, and just as on the stage they would have applauded a real lamp-post or a real horse-car, so a live artist at work was for the nonce more absorbing than the pictures of a dead one. They had little time, however, to look, for they were involuntary impressionists and were hurried away by their leader. These caravans were always noisy and hurried, and no wonder, for a con-

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

ductor who is at once dictionary, time-table, mentor, friend, and whipper-in of stray couples, must be a tired and a worried person.

The brothers divided the duty of *cicerone* cleverly. Fra Giovanni, a stout, handsome monk, evidently their best spokesman, explained their Ghirlandaji; for they are a more complicated people than the other frescoed ones, because their names are often known and may be catalogued to the visitor, not only in the anticipation of *buona mano*, but with real, corporate pride. "We have not such Giotto as has Santa Croce," said he, one day, "but our Gaddi and Memmi are unequalled in the world; and as for our Ghirlandaji"—here he interrupted himself to jingle two keys at some distant tourists and call to them, in a sort of subdued shout, "Do the gentlemen wish to visit the Spanish chapel?" Brother—— (his name has escaped our memories) could show the other chapels, and any one who happened to be near, in frock or out of it, monk or bell-ringer, would cheerfully and unasked fling a bit of information to any foreigner who happened to approach the object named: "*Terra invetriata, molto bella, Luca della Robbia.*" The Robbia fountain was beautiful indeed, and it was a pleasure to see this noble art-work taking its part in the daily uses of life, as the brothers often and again washed their hands or rinsed their *fiaschi* in it, nowise fearing the in-



## ITALIAN CITIES

junction running beneath the Madonna across the marble: "Take heed that thy hands be pure if thou washest here." Service after service passed out of the little sacristy as we sat there, and the bell took on a solemn sound for us when we learned that it ushered forth the *viaticum* upon its frequent errand to the sick and dying.

During another visit to Florence, two years later, we saw Brother Antonino again, and he sat for a study of his head. He looked as much like Savonarola as ever, but "the pleasant lust of arrogance" in the great reformer was softened in him into a gentle complacency that artists should wish to paint him. To the remark, "So you are still at Santa Maria Novella," he replied; "I shall die here." Let us hope so; it would be a pity that the church should be secularized, that the "Sposa" of Michelangelo should have her nun's veil taken from her and should exchange her cowled brothers for the blue-coated guardians of a government museum.

In the latter half of "Romola," the episodic groupings of various characters whose dialogue is framed by the mercato, or the loggia, or the shop, are replaced by the continuous dramatic interest. The fate of Romola herself is interwoven with the fate of the republic, and the background of the story becomes the history of Florence. We follow the heroine upon an upward current of suffering as she

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

loses, successively, husband, godfather, and teacher; upon the same current the city is borne along, breathing hard in the struggle that preceded its final agony,—the siege of 1529,—while George Eliot makes Tito an active instrument in the fortunes of the state, without violating historical consistency, and to Tito, whose “mind was a knife-edge, working without the need of momentum,” she adds the bludgeon-like Dolfo Spini. We see the great monk holding the people, first by enthusiasm, then by the means which enthusiasts are often swept into using when they feel the reins slipping from them; finally accepting, under pressure, the Franciscan challenge to enter the fire. Before that, however, the crowning bitterness of Romola’s life is reached, when her teacher, Savonarola, fails her, and Bernardo del Nero goes to the scaffold. All the remainder of the story that relates purely to the heroine is anticlimax. We see Tito’s knife-blade working noiselessly on, the edge turned always from himself, severing women’s heart-strings and men’s lives, his prosperity increasing with his treachery. The trial by fire follows, and the Masque of the Furies, and as Tito’s fortunes are at their highest, the knife turns in his hands, cutting his best-laid schemes to pieces. After the death of the traitor comes the burning of Savonarola, and the story ends.

The tragedy is lighted by the conversion of Monna

## ITALIAN CITIES

Brigida on the day of the Pyramid of Vanities and by the scenes with Bratti and Tessa. But the main pathway of this latter portion of the story becomes that from San Marco to the Piazza della Signoria, along which pass figures, blessing and cursing; cowed monks and armed rabble; the torch and the crucifix, but all tending forward, past the death of Savonarola, to the apotheosis of Florence, when she stood alone for liberty, and fell at last after her famous siege.

It is one of the longest pathways trodden in the story, for the convent is farther from the centre of the city than most of the points already mentioned. The nearest way from the palace is down the Calzaioli to the Cathedral Place, then by the Via Cavour to the Piazza di San Marco. Calzaioli is still the busiest street in Florence, and in Romola's time, far narrower than now, bore the name of the Corso degli Adimari at its northern end, and in the portion near the old palace, that of the Via de' Pittori, for the painters who helped give fame to Florence were worthily lodged there. The Via Cavour was the Via Larga (the wide street), on which still stands the palace of Cosimo, the Ancient. A rather paradoxical loss of its old name followed its second widening, and a good choice has given to the street of the first republic's enslaver the name of one of the liberators of Italy. •

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

San Marco, standing upon its wide piazza, is at first disappointing. It is too trim, the edges of wall and arch too sharp, too liberally covered with white and yellow wash. It seems almost tame for the great memories that should haunt it and walk the bare corridors under the beamed roof. There are plenty of them: memories of Bishop Antonino and Fra Bartolommeo and the monk of Fiesole, all giving way before those of the extraordinary man who, from 1492 to 1498, was the central figure of Italy; who drew upon himself the hatred of the Pope and the Franciscans, the admiration of Michelangelo and partisans of liberty; who reconciled austerity with the love of beauty in the eyes of such painters as Botticelli, Baccio della Porta, and Lorenzo di Credi, and who believed that to unlock the doors of Paradise the keys of Saint Peter must be cleansed from the rust of the slothful popes, the blood of Sixtus and the Borgias. Florence is so rich in famous men that her long portico of the Uffizi has room for but a small portion of them, but among them no name is more essentially Florentine than that of the Ferrarese Girolamo Savonarola. The traces of his footsteps are visible enough in the city which has so well retained its ancient appearance. Every one visits his cell in San Marco, and sees his portraits there and in the academy. His church has been modern-

## ITALIAN CITIES

ized into seventeenth-century ugliness; but on the night of the "Masque of the Furies," it echoed with the fusillade of monks and acolytes firing from the altar, and with the crash of blows as the scriptorius, a kind of loving young Saint John to Savonarola, beat back the *compagnacci* with his heavy crucifix. Along the streets which, on the night of his arrest, the reformer traversed between the armed guards he had asked from the priors, we go to the Palazzo Vecchio and the Piazza della Signoria.

There are in the world few grander buildings than the citadel of Florentine liberty, the Palazzo Vecchio; it is an embodiment of militant beauty in stone. In earlier times the scene of so much that was noble and base, it became in the fifteenth century the place of Savonarola's triumph and agony. For there in the vast hall of that great council he so labored to secure, he set a whole people to work at a fever-heat of enthusiasm, with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci among the workers, that an asylum might be created, a refuge and an appeal to the many against the injustice of the few. The Medici changed the place; the arch-patrons of art destroyed the designs of Angelo and Leonardo, setting up the clumsy statues of Leo and the dukes, and the ceilings of Vasari, celebrating Cosimo; they wanted no unpleasant souvenir of the great council. But the centuries have seen "the Medicean

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

stamp outworn," and have placed the statue of the monk in the middle of his hall.

Broad stairways lead to the base of the tower whose machicolated parapet and column-supported summit give it such unique character. A narrow spiral leads up and up, each loophole-window showing a higher sky-line, till, when the top is nearly reached, under the battlements, between the corbels of which are the shields of the republic, a horrible place opens from the stairs into the wall. In it there is just room for a stone bench the length of a man. The small, heavy door swings outward. In this hideous cell Savonarola lay for days, his body racked by the torture, his mind by the consciousness that his enemies were inventing and attributing to him lying speeches to dismay his disciples. He left it only for the stake. In the massive wall the window, less than a foot square, splays in and funnels toward a point; the one object visible from this slit in the wall is the brown mass of Santa Croce, the stronghold of his enemies, the Franciscans, whence issued the challenge for the trial by fire, the first fatal downward step in the reformer's path.

A few paces above this inferno, Paradise itself seems to open as the platform of the tower is reached. Around one are the forked Ghibelline battlements; from their midst rise the four massive columns; a dizzy staircase, winding about one of these, leads to

## ITALIAN CITIES

the bells ; still another and narrower stairway takes one, with care and stooping, to the cow-stall, the abode of the antique *vacca*, the bell whose lowing called the townsmen together. There it still hangs from beams placed pyramidally and forming the point of the tower. Above it, upon a vane, in violent foreshortening, Marzocco, the lion of the republic, in that attitude of ecstatic flourishing peculiar to lions in such cases, waves his mane and tail high above his brother Marzocco of the Bargello, and over all other Marzocchi, bronze, marble, or wooden, in Tuscany. Before one is the valley of the Arno from the mountains of the Casentino to the dentelated Apennines of Carrara, with the shining river curving down to Pisa. Below is the city, and as one mounts, the great buildings rise far above their fellows, as great men in history rise to their true places in the past, when seen from the present. The familiar landmarks of the old time are still there, till we read the city like a page of Villani or of Dino Compagni. Palaces and churches stand to-day as when Guelph and Ghibelline were names potent to conjure with and to strike fire from steel ; streets and squares, as when Savonarola quivered in the room below or burned upon the piazza.

There is something new, too : "The Pope Angelico is not come yet ;" but here at our hand, upon the parapet, workmen are setting out lamps for the

## IN FLORENCE WITH ROMOLA

birthday of a queen who writes Savoy after her name, and yet who gathers among those who acclaim her with affection, Florentines and the antique enemies of Florence, citizens of north and south,—a queen of United Italy. For the ashes of Savonarola, which were sown broadcast to the wind, have borne seed in the days when the land cherishes the dust of patriots and writes upon the stones of its cities the names of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and Cavour and Victor Emmanuel.

The story of "Romola" leaves us with a sense of sadness and defeat. Savonarola died mute and unjustified; his friends and disciples robbed, murdered, and driven into exile; his life's work undone, and the kingdom of God, he had labored to found, shaken to its foundations. But only a few years after, under a Medicean pope, he is solemnly rehabilitated by the church; the historians estimate him at his true value; devotees make pilgrimages to his cell; Fra Bartolommeo paints him as the patron saint of his order, and Raphael places him in a frescoed Paradise among a glorious company of prophets and sages. To-day, in an Italy that does not love monks, Ferrara raises his statue before the castle of the Estensi, and in Florence, in the vastness of the great council-hall, his colossal image. Many changes have come to his beloved city; but she is faithful to his memory, and

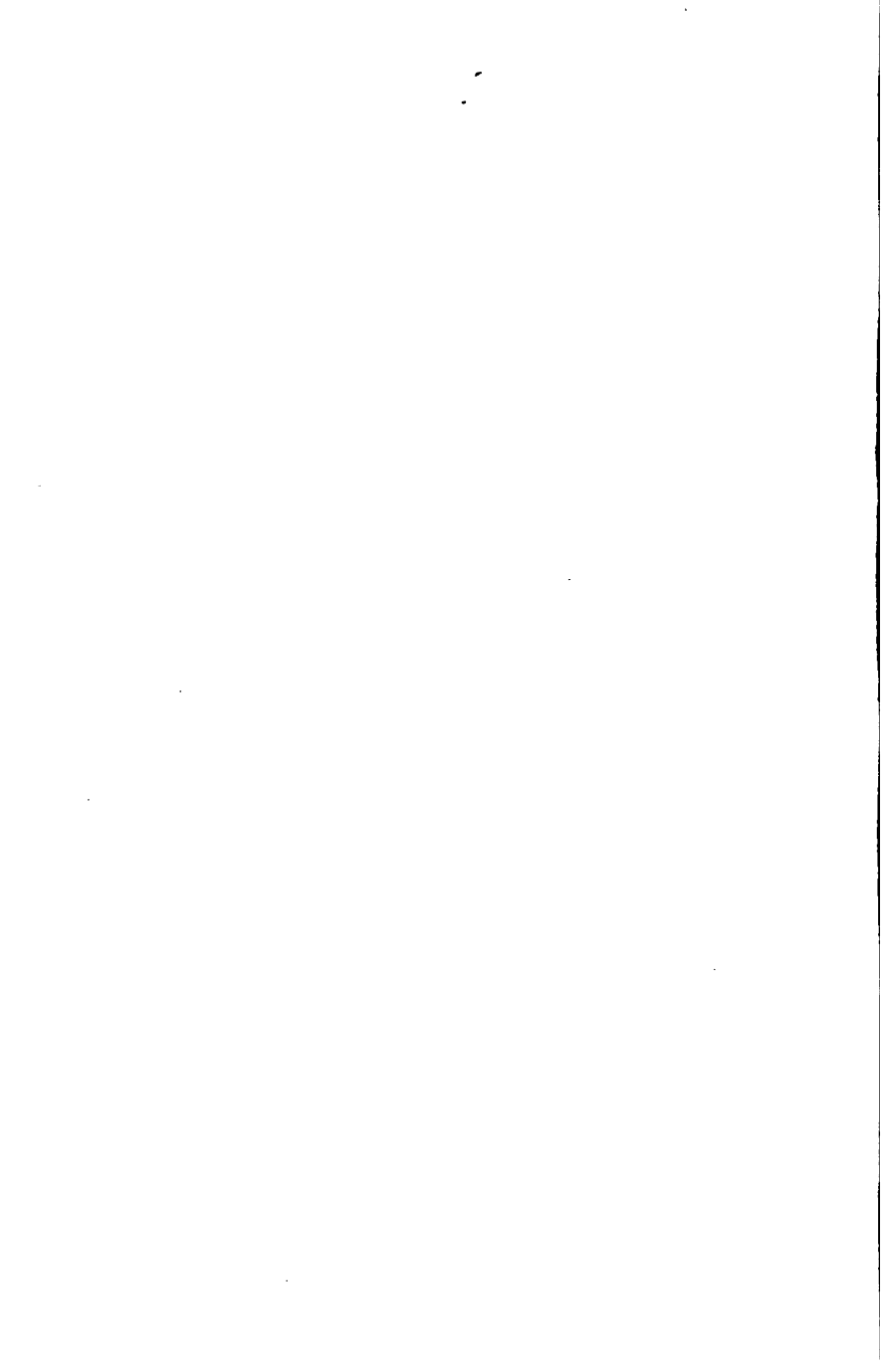


## ITALIAN CITIES

those who do not reverence the priest honor the patriot who withstood tyrants and loved freedom.

For here, in Italy, liberty has worn many guises; she has hidden herself in the scholar's gown and has laughed in the motley. She has rioted in the Masque of the Furies, and put on the soldier's corselet, the poet's laurel, and the monk's frock and cowl. In our own days we have seen her in the red shirt of Garibaldi, when she came to take possession of the land. The miracle that prophets and patriots prayed for in vain has been wrought in its own time. After three hundred years the prophecy of Savonarola has been fulfilled, and the deliverers have come, not from without, but within, not to save the city only, but the whole country: a king whose proudest title was that of honest man, and a soldier who unsheathed the sword of righteousness. Italy is free from the Alps to the straits. The narrow jealousies and fierce civic hatreds of province to province and town to town are vanishing before the large ideal of national unity, an ideal nobler than that of the great reformer, and Florence can again write liberty upon her banner above the lions and the lilies.

**PARMA**



## PARMA

### I

PARMA! Correggio! They are exchangeable words for you and me and the art-loving of all countries, since it is her possession of the work of Antonio Allegri that gives the town importance. Upon that Roman road which passes straight through the city, there was marching and countermarching from the time when in 183 B.C. Marcus Æmilius Lepidus gave his name to road and province alike and there were doubtless deeds done that resounded throughout Italy, but the road itself, stretching as it did from Rimini to Piacenza, was, at least, just where *Colonia Julia Augusta Parma* arose, itself the mightiest thing in sight and memory. As far as our interest is concerned, it passed along in obscurity for fifteen hundred years, nowise illuminated by the constant quarrels that gave to the town of which we write, successive masters, until in the beginning of the sixteenth century, precisely at this point of Parma, the Via Æmilia became irradiated, brilliant with the name and presence of a famous artist.

## ITALIAN CITIES

The exterior impress upon the city postdates Correggio, for it was only after the Farnese came to power that Parma had any settled government. Once, when as a town of the Exarchate, she looked to Ravenna for the password, she must have flourished exceedingly, for the Byzantines called her the golden city, and we should perhaps still have some solemnly glittering mosaics, relics of that Chrysopolis, if the Lombards had not destroyed the place in 773. Afterward, and during the destructive activity which began in the dark ages and continued through mediæval times, Parma had so many masters that they might pass us like a panoramic show of historic characters illustrating all times and costumes for half a millennial : antipopes and popes ; Guelphic captains, the Giberti, the Rossi, the Sanvitali ; John XXII. ; Louis of Bavaria ; John of Bohemia ; Scala lords of Verona ; Visconti of Milan ; Sforze too, and lastly, Popes Julius II. and Leo X. The tiara finally seemed to have settled firmly upon the city, and if the Farnese who began to rule with Pierluigi were not a delectable family, at least they provided a succession of seven dukes.

They, however, gave their town no such fatherly care as was accorded by the Montefeltri to Urbino or the Gonzaghe to Mantua. Parma was too often only the tail of the kite. Parmesan affairs were too frequently watched, but from far away, from the

## PARMA

Papal Court or the throne of Spain or the marshes of Flanders, by princes busied with outside interests. Thus the present Parma grew up stately, formal, and rather bare, dating from the Farnese and the late sixteenth century and countersigned ducal by its huge brick castello. In Italy it was quintessentially ducal to have just such a pile of masonry to hold the master safely within and to hold the townsmen in subjection without; no well-regulated reigning family could dispense with such a puissant aid to good government. In the Republics it was different; in Siena and Florence, for instance, the Palazzo Pubblico came shouldering into the square, and if Cosimo Pater Patriæ wanted a palace for himself, he built it on the street like any other man; a fortress it was, if you will, in its massiveness, but only one of many such private strongholds scattered throughout the city. More than this, he gave not a little thought to private jealousy, and tore up Brunelleschi's ground-plans and elevations, lest their ambitious character should provoke republican envy. On the contrary, Estensi, Gonzaghe, Montefeltri, Visconti, and Farnese alike set great, moat-girt castles upon the town's edge, whence they could watch and strike if need be. The Castello forms the principal feature of Ferrara, Mantua, Parma, and Urbino; it is huge in Milan also; but there the great church overshadows it with its presence. As one passes

## ITALIAN CITIES

from city to city, each castello seems bigger than the other, and, taken together, they afford admirable examples of the beauty, picturesqueness, nobility even, of brick when used in large masses. The great flat expanses are impressive in their very blankness; they are blank, however, only as to lack of sculptured ornament; color they have in plenty given by sun and rain, and flying dust, and here and there, as where the Parmesan Castello overhangs the water, they forsake their naked simplicity and break into a whole mass of flying galleries and ports to once-existent drawbridges.

Symonds thought Parma "perhaps the brightest little *Residenzstadt* of the second class in Italy;" to us it seemed (as with so much else in the peninsula) that its brightness was wholly an affair of the season at which you happened to visit it. It is gay and bright in spring and summer, —what town is not in Italy?— then the band plays in the evenings, many of the shops are still lighted and the people pour into the square, or loiter homeward from Vespers at the Steccata or the Duomo; but in winter it appeared to us unutterably sad, —sad as Modena, yielding in melancholy only to Ravenna and Ferrara, and lacking even the brightness of Ferrara's market-place. For the grim castle of Mantua is relieved by the quaint cheerfulness of the streets, that of Ferrara by the cathedral's picturesque neighborhood; but

## PARMA

Parma's streets stretch unbroken, unrelieved by any sally.

If primness were not so utterly foreign to Renaissance life or to anything Italian that came after it, we should call some of these streets prim ; perhaps a little of the starch and powder of the court has gotten into things ; the place looks something more than respectable, and during our last visit to Parma in the winter, we remember not cabs, but heavy old family carriages rolling slowly by, containing very possibly children and grandchildren of Maria Louisa's ladies of honor.

The loveliness of summer belongs to Parma in common with other cities ; the vine-hung mulberry trees take hands and dance in the fields about her as around other towns, but Verona would be beautiful in any weather, so would Venice or Florence or Rome ; Parma needs sun in her gray streets and blue sky above them. Our former visits had been during spring and summer, but our last sojourn was in winter days when snow covered everything to the east of the Apennines, and when the white fog pierced through your very bones. In the mist-filled solitudes about the Duomo after nightfall the cold fairly took you by the throat ; the Baptistery shone with ice, and the porch-lions of the Cathedral looked as though some eighteenth-century Farnese had fitted powdered wigs upon them. The *Torrente*



## ITALIAN CITIES

from its bridges seemed a Phlegethon, a river of whirling smoke, but felt like what it really was, a reservoir of benumbing vapor.

In those days when we went into the Castello we wondered, in the bitter cold, how men and women with blood in circulation, and therefore capable of congealing, could possibly keep alive there.

In one room we found a fine fire in a large sheet-iron stove and thought delightedly that it was in part at least for us poor human animals, custodians and visitors, but no! "It is kept burning always," said the *custode*, "in order that a perfectly even temperature may help to preserve the two best pictures of Correggio." It was a pretty tribute, this "fire that burns for aye," to the tutelary genius of the place, and logical enough, for Correggio keeps up the foreign circulation of Parma; but it seemed a bit inhuman, and reminded one *tant soit peu* of the Irishman who in freezing weather said, "Put the blanket on the pig; 't is he that pays the rint." Italians, however, are really affectionate in their consideration of art objects; if they maltreat them, it is only through ignorance, and Maria Louisa's refusal to accept from Louis XVIII. a million francs for the San Girolamo, although she was at the time in sore straits for money, is perhaps the most honorable thing chronicled concerning a lady whose life was by no means destitute of good actions.

## PARMA

The pinacoteca, as may be inferred from that unique sheet-iron stove, is in the Castello; but Correggio is so great a glory that he claims consideration by and for himself and should not be talked of until after anything otherwise distracting about the town is quite finished and done with.

In the castle, too, is the famous Teatro Farnese, as strange as Palladio's *Scena* of Vicenza, and ten times more impressive.

In all its decay it is still a beautiful Renaissance theatre; one of our companions longed to have it summer-time that he might sleep for a night in the midst of this departed magnificence. It would be well to sleep soundly there and not walk; only ghosts could do that with safety, for the wood is rotted to punk; and the *custode*, saying, "Take care, *c'è pericolo*," leads one up prescribed paths, where beams have been placed to prop up the seats and incidentally the guardian's perquisites. If one did wake, one would perhaps see Poliziano's Orfeo, or Machiavelli's Mandragora, moving in shadowy pantomime across the vast stage, but, for our part, we should rather expect to meet the ghosts of those who played *real* dramas in the Castello, ghosts made substantial by the portraits in the pinacoteca of dozens of Farnesi. The latter are not a little interesting to the student of history, and there are notably a boy-duke Alessandro, an Elizabeth of

## ITALIAN CITIES

France with her husband, and a terrible-looking seventeenth-century Maria Farnese; while Moro, Subtermans, and Vandyck are among the painters.

We walked the Æmilian Way from gate to gate of the city, and even strolled into the outskirts; and after the Castello and the Duomo, San Giovanni, and the Steccata, we of course visited the Camera of San Paolo, where the place is still consecrate to women and a normal school is sheltered in the convent.

But the group of buildings which called one again and again was that upon the Cathedral square, made up of the Duomo, the Baptistery, and San Giovanni Evangelista. It is a sad, deserted place, unlike the busy spots about the churches of Ferrara, Modena, or Mantua. The Baptistery, godparent, it is said, to every man and woman in Parma for many centuries, is a grim Gothic structure, and in Benedetto Antelami, the author of the sculptures upon its front, certain critics consider that they recognize a Day Star of Italian art, a true precursor of Niccola Pisano.

"If Italians have not always painted well, at least they have always painted," says one of their own writers, and the Duomo's interior is a testimony to the activity of eight hundred years. Sitting at the further end of the choir, one noted close at hand the archiepiscopal throne carved at about the time of Hastings; beyond in tawny marble was an altar

## PARMA

contemporary with the Lombard League ; above the throne was a marble and gilt bas-relief of the thirteenth century ; under a curtain and where later stucco had been scraped away, one saw a Madonna of the school of Giotto ; fifteenth-century stalls gave us sitting room ; there was plenty of *cinquecento* and *seicento* work, while two huge gilded candlesticks and a *barocco* bench were of a time when Tiepolo had already painted periwigged goddesses, and Stendhal was about to write his "Chartreuse de Parme." All these representatives of different ages were within a radius of fifteen feet ; thus it is in lands where people are in no hurry ; think of it, ye architects, sculptors, painters, who contract in May to decorate a building and must finish or forfeit by the following April ! But beautiful as is the old Romanesque basilica, one comes, not to see its grand architecture of the middle ages, but to visit works which were only possible to a man who had the whole fifteenth century behind him and the influence of the *cinquecento*, the culminating epoch of Italian art, about him.

## II

SPACE, light, and motion were what Antonio Allegri of Correggio most longed to express; for this expression he made the open heaven his field, and masses of floating, soaring, human bodies, draped or undraped, his material. The performance of such a task required a temperament almost magically endowed, but such a temperament he possessed, and he gave it full scope in the dome of the Cathedral of Parma and the cupola of San Giovanni. The frescoes in these churches are his greatest achievements, and by them we may judge him. Their arrangement is very similar, both represent an assumption of Madonna or of the Saviour. Above, in the centre of the dome, is the ascending Christ or Mary with attendant or supporting angels; where the interior cornice surrounds the octagonal cupola of the Duomo, apostles stand against a simulated balustrade gazing upward, and on the pendentives of both churches, saints and angels are seated upon clouds. To those who, looking upon these frescoes, think superficially, Correggio is as a painter of flying angels and radiant glories, an arch-idealist; to those who reason more carefully, he is an arch-realist,

## PARMA

almost *the* realist of Italian art. What differentiates him from the accepted realist is this: the latter only too often makes realism and ugliness synonymous, Correggio's is realism by selection applied only to the beautiful. But it is realism; not one painter in the whole range of Italian art so hated what he understood to be conventionality. If his subject is above, it must be seen from underneath, no matter how the point of view may detract from the beauty of the work; his architecture must be painted in simulated perspective, and he will tolerate nothing which by its perspective would fall out if it were real.

In his frescoes of San Giovanni which antedated those of the cathedral, Correggio, first among the artists of Italy, threw aside the whole architectonic tradition of art and said to himself, "I will break through tradition and cupola at once, will consider that the walls are no longer there, and will make a realistic heaven, where real figures among real clouds shall be seen in real perspective, such as would actually obtain." *Nota bene*, that a cupola, a hollow dome without ribs or projections from the plaster, is the only form to which such a *trompe l'œil*, such illusory perspective, could be applied without being ridiculous. Even here it is open to criticism, but if any man ever existed for whom it was entirely right to do this thing, that man was

## ITALIAN CITIES

**Antonio Allegri of Correggio.** Imitators have abused his example until the abuse became detestable; but the example remains so brilliant, so satisfying, that we blame only those who failed in their imitation.

The first and most potent factor in the effect of his Assumption of the Duomo is its triumphant realization of aerial, transparent fresco-color of which indeed it is the earliest perfectly successful example in Italy. To the artist, and above all to the artist who has worked upon the plaster and knows how readily overpainting becomes heavy and dead, the marvellous lightness, silveriness, airiness of Correggio's frescoes, especially of his frescoes of the Cathedral, are an unceasing wonder.

Correggio's second factor is his distribution of light; his third, expression by movement. Leonardo da Vinci had discovered light and shade; Correggio improved upon his invention. Leonardo experimenting with many media painted shadows which have fallen into blackness, Correggio, as Milanese has happily put it, "clarified Da Vinci's manner." Leonardo pursued the light with profoundest observation; Correggio juggled with it: he did not ask it to be mysterious, he was satisfied that it should be radiant. He *entertained* himself with light, as Michelangelo entertained himself with muscular expression, Raphael with composition; like both the others, he possessed his means and made it yield not only

## PARMA

enjoyment, but its ultimate force in certain directions. He composed with light more than with lines, and here he came nearer to being conventional than elsewhere, for there is a certain amount of *parti pris* in his chiaroscuro, which, however, if not exactly unconventional, is always real. As to his third factor, Correggio is Perpetual Motion itself, with him everything is in action.

That movement in repose which is so suited to the demands of great mural art, which helps to make Michelangelo's *Pietà* of St. Peter's so superb, which informs so many figures of Raphael, so many altar-pieces even of the *quattrocento*, is quite absent from Correggio's work. His angels of the dome mount upward, cleave the air, toss and bend, bstride clouds which they ride like curveting horses, but they are never quiet for a moment.

Even in altar-pieces, where Raphael's saints stand firmly, though their lines may curve ever so gracefully, Correggio's figures undulate until they seem almost out of equilibrium. Michelangelo's Delphic and Lybian Sibyls have superb movement, but it is ponderated, it does not fatigue the onlooker; Correggio's Saints Jerome and Sebastian in the altar-pieces to which they respectively give their names are absolutely unsteady upon their feet. In sum his movement in smaller pictures is often ineffective; but when he masses it in his great frescoes, it be-



## ITALIAN CITIES

comes, on the contrary, a potent element of his effect.

Smiling, youthful beauty is what Correggio elected to paint. His sprite-like angels, naked youths and maidens, who if measured by mortal span may have lived for fourteen years, are dearest both to their creator and to the onlooker. With tossing hair, wide light-filled eyes, and parted lips they ride the clouds upon the pendentives or uphold Madonna; among them the babies tumble, with the same great lustrous eyes and with little, realistic, formless, toothless mouths. In the pendentives or about the base of the cupola are patriarchs, prophets, and saints, and here Correggio is puzzled; he would juggle age away, would sprinkle it with the water of Eternal Youth; it has no dignity for him; its emaciation, its dryness, he will have none of; his old men may be brawny, but they are over-plump, over-muscled indeed, since in them Correggio shows none of the science of expression through anatomical emphasis which Michelangelo possessed. Their thick hair is always tumbling about and always curling; their beards evidently grow over full-lipped, smiling mouths, and they are not very pleasing as types. In some cases it seems as if Correggio had but taken his youths and, clapping false beards upon them, had said to patriarch or prophet, "I care nothing for your face; toss and turn your great

## PARMA

body in the light and in the half-light; that is all the help I ask of you." And yet they are fine. This is what one says again and again before Correggio, "and yet," and "in spite of," ending always with surrender to a compelling enchantment and force.

Burckhardt with excellent analysis, Symonds with admirable word-painting, have said much of the psychological side of Correggio's types, have found them wondrously beautiful, yet denied them power to do good were they to live. In this essay, however, we are considering not the psychological but the purely artistic side of the painter. If the authors of these lines may here for a moment intrude their own personality upon their book, it would be to say that much in Correggio's point of view is unsympathetic, almost antipathetic to them; all of his minor work, his world-famous altar-pieces and mythological pictures included, seems but loosely put together, if brought into presence of the almost architecturally constructed composition of Raphael, the grave splendor of Titian's Assumption, the profoundly suggestive figures of Michelangelo. His sweetness even appears but superficial after that of Leonardo. Nevertheless, and in spite of all these reservations, the authors of this essay, when first they came into the presence of the dome of Parma, for awhile at least had no capacity for anything but de-

## ITALIAN CITIES

lighted admiration of a phenomenal art development. Wholly phenomenal it is, and the surprise of it adds not a little to its effectiveness. A day in which one has a supreme artistic experience may be marked by a whitest stone, and such a day should be afforded by a first visit to Parma; for there is an immense sensation in coming suddenly into the presence of the highest and best achievement of one of the world's masters. Acquaintance with Correggio's pictures in the galleries of Europe prepares but in small measure for what awaits one in the cathedral of Parma.

There the ordering of Correggio's work is as follows: in the pendentives of the cupola are four seated saints with many youthful angels, the seated figures enthroned upon clouds. Twelve colossal apostles stand along an octagonal cornice behind a painted balustrade, looking upward at the Assumption of the Virgin. Painted candelabra rise at the angles of the cornice, and between them are many boy genii standing, sitting, or reclining. Above them the whole cupola is filled with clouds and a multitude of flying figures surrounding the Virgin, who is borne upward. Under the soffits of the arches to the cupola are painted figures of genii, six of which are by Correggio, the others by Mazzola-Bedoli.

The above is the material distribution of the frescoes. Considered generally, the result is the achieve-


## PARMA

ment of one of the few works which may be called sublime. Technically considered, this Assumption presents the first triumphantly successful realization of aerial, transparent fresco-color. For the first time also, save in the case of the same master's frescoes of San Giovanni, architectonics are disregarded, and a whole cupola is shown as one undivided and realistic composition. The color is beyond criticism; the arrangement, which in principle is, on the contrary, distinctly open to criticism, is justified by its result. It is splendidly, dazzlingly successful; and yet not only the few to whom it is antipathetic, but the many who profoundly admire, may analyze it and find in it certain germs of decadence.

To begin with, it is confused, and in the painter's passion for realistic foreshortening he has frequently sacrificed dignity, and has sometimes become frankly awkward. The monumental grandeur of Raphael and Michelangelo is completely absent, but it is replaced by another grandeur, which comes from sweep and whirl and radiant figures so multiplied in numbers that the very volume of the painter's creation adds immensely to its power. They are upon every side, these figures, bending and tossing, floating and diving through clouds, hovering above the abysmal void that is between the dome and the earth below it. There is a lack of restraint, indeed, there is a direct straining for that illusion which is not wholly

## ITALIAN CITIES

in accordance with the principles of architectonic decoration, but *any* violation of artistic conventions is permissible to a genius who through rupture with tradition creates new forms of beauty. Here is the triumphant application of realism to a vision, not the tranquil, contemplative vision of an older master, but a moving vision, rapturous and ecstatic.



It must be admitted that the color of these frescoes, the element in fact which technically is most admirable in the work, varies astonishingly under varying conditions of the atmosphere. In spring and summer when the light reflected from below and admitted through the *oculi* fills the cupola, this color seems all that we have said of it, — more cool and silvery than any fresco-color which preceded it. In the dark winter days and under a threatening sky, it is quite different; then the lower figures of the cupola, those about the balustrade, are rather red in their shadows, not quite brickly, but approaching brickiness far more than in fine weather; the upper figures are cooler and those of the pendentives are as silvery as ever. All this means that a decorator can paint for only one set of atmospheric conditions, and that in Italy the conditions are practically those of an eight months' summer, when light pours into the churches, even through the smallest openings, and is reflected back and upward from pavement, pillar, and wall. In one town after another the

## PARMA

traveler sets down in his diary, "The frescoes could not be seen at all;" that is because he goes to them at the wrong season and at the wrong hours. If visited at the right season and time, nearly every fresco in Italy which is not injured beyond deciphering can be well seen. And yet it is notable that wherever a dome is decorated, and in spite of the fact that such painting is planned as an enhancement to the church, seen from the usual point of view,—that is, the pavement,—the visitor is always taken to some higher point of vantage and told, "Here is the proper place from which to see the frescoes." This is to a certain extent reasonable, since after the *ensemble* has produced its effect, there is always detail which makes closer inspection interesting, for no artist who has lived, ever struck the exact mean of strength or delicacy, permitting his work upon a very high dome or ceiling to focus its entire carrying power upon just one point of vision. This shifting about of the spectator is an argument in favor of concentrating dome decoration upon the pendentives, which can nearly always be admirably seen from below.

In Parma, then as elsewhere, one may climb to a higher point; few people do, but it is well worth the doing, and we supplemented each visit to the church by a journey to the intermural gallery which surrounds the cupola. It is interesting to explore

## ITALIAN CITIES

the bones of these mediæval monsters, these Romanesque and Gothic churches, which were not so time-resisting as Greek temples, but whose dusty skeletons had to be constantly patched and propped from within as well as from without their epidermises of brick or stone (for cupolas have often, like human beings, three skins).

In the Parmesan Duomo, an exceptionally narrow and steep stone staircase twists you up rapidly to above the pendentives; their outer surfaces—or inner, as you please—rise in huge lumpish mounds like giant shoulders heaving up the central dome; above them old, old beams are a framework of bones to support the outer skin of tiles. The dust, the cobwebs, the sharp contrasts of bright light and black shadow, the worn steps, the bells amid their ship-like cordage and wheels, make such places unique in their quaintness. The guide pulls open with an echoing rattle a small door in the thick wall; light bursts in; below you is an awful depth; two iron bars, strong but slight, to the imagination, are between you and it, and beyond the bars and the abyss, the smiling giants of Correggio float lightly over a dizzy gulf that makes your spinal marrow creep. There is an admixture of horror with delight in the first moment, and this feeling, combined with a certain exaltation, and the excitement of suddenly looking out from a dark, bewildering, cramped pas-

## PARMA

sage into a wide, light-filled dome, adds greatly to the sense of vision.

They are close at hand now upon every side of the spectator, floating or tossing, poised and hanging, or shooting upward, while behind the main groups is a background of smiling figures with close-set shoulders and clinging arms, — "the young-eyed cherubim" garlanding Madonna.

Here one is at last face to face with these much-discussed types of Correggio. It is easy to follow lines of obvious criticism, the faces all resemble each other, they are idealizations, abstractions with always the ripe, smiling mouth, the round cheeks, the radiant eyes. They are all of one family, a glorified, happy family. There is no terror here as with Michelangelo, hardly any awe even, but when the critic, having said all this, goes further and would talk of prettiness or of insipid uniformity of character, he ceases, utterly disarmed, for here in this whirling mass is *puissance*, something of the tremendous sweep that should come when the choir sings, "Behold, God the Lord passeth by," and which makes Correggio one of the half-dozen sublime masters in Art.

These are not blessed spirits, they are sprites, "they are fauns," says Burckhardt, and after him, Symonds; and it must be admitted that they suggest the spirits of the Tempest rather than the



## ITALIAN CITIES

angels and seraphs of the Bible, but their elfin beauty needs not distract us from considering the general effect. It is the very volume of this whirling, sweeping mass that moves us. Where Correggio places one or two of these shapes upon a canvas he plays to us upon a flute and allures us with his piping, but when he pours them upon us in hundreds he "un-stops the full organ." If, as individual figures, they are fairy-like, as a mass they are apocalyptic.

"But what good," persists Burckhardt, "could we expect from these creations if they came to life"? and truly Correggio does seem more than half a pagan or half a child in his cultus of pure joy. These spirits do not suffer, feel no terror; they do not know any better than to be just simply and entirely happy. But does not the critic, in insisting upon their potentiality for good, set up an ethical standard which it might be embarrassingly hard to uphold. In looking at the face of Michelangelo's "Night," or his "Dawn," do we know what either would do if she too began to breathe and move: she would be titanic surely, but how would she use her force? Would she pull down Jupiter to help mortals or for the mere pleasure of power? Each has a giant's strength, but might not she "use it like a giant"? What evil could we find in Correggio's people? If bright and joyous spirits are celestial, why, so are his; he laughs and smiles by choice, but he smiles

## PARMA

as Michelangelo frowns, sublimely ; elevation is his, and elevation is ethical, for in spite of his lack of restraint and his exaggeration of illusion in mock architecture, the outpouring of spirit, the sweep and power, shown in his Assumption of the Virgin, make him one of the half-dozen sublime masters of Italian painting, and we echo Ludwig Tieck's words : " Let no one say he has seen Italy, let no one think he has learnt the lofty secrets of art, till he has seen thee and thy cathedral, O Parma ! "

Correggio executed two other cycles of frescoes, — the very secular decorations of the Camera di San Paolo, and in the cupola of San Giovanni Evangelista, an Ascension of Christ, a work which antedated that of the Duomo. In the Ascension this youth of twenty-six deliberately threw aside the entire decorative paraphernalia of the fifteenth century, the scrolls and thrones and embroidered patterns, the flowers and fruits and garlands, and, like a young soldier who in wishing to make a supreme effort found his armor cumbersome, he cast it from him and fought baresark. In return for *quattrocento* ornament he accepted nothing but nude bodies and the simplest of draperies as his material.

Signor Corrado Ricci, the learned curator of the Parmesan galleries, has published an admirable book upon Correggio which all lovers of the artist should

## ITALIAN CITIES

read. It is not often that one takes exception to his reasoning, but it is difficult to agree with some of his opinions regarding the frescoes of San Giovanni. He thinks that because of their greater restraint they surpass those of the Duomo, but what they gain in simplicity and restraint they lose in lack of volume. Correggio is not one of those artists who are at their best when they are simplest, and in the frescoes of San Giovanni he has made most use of the types that were least congenial to him, those of middle-aged or old men. Signor Ricci compares these saints and apostles with those of Michelangelo to the disadvantage of the latter. "The ostentatious display of anatomical reliefs" with Michelangelo never fails to show a perfect competency, a knowledge of construction, which is absent in Correggio; his saints in the pendentives are excellent, but his apostles about the Christ look swollen; their huge muscles are not modelled; their attitudes are as constrained as those of Michelangelo without showing the latter's knowledge of construction or grandeur of line.

Having considered the two cupolas in their general decorative impression, there remains in the mind, as must be the case in the remembrance of all great grouped masses, certain features which stand out as adding to or detracting from that same general effect, but even at the maximum of their

## PARMA

importance these remain details. Our opportunity to study them is largely owed to the water-color studies and line-engravings of Paolo Toschi, who literally spent his life upon the scaffolding, examining and copying the crumbling frescoes of the Duomo and San Giovanni. No more touching tribute has been paid to a master in the whole history of art. The sincerity of the copyist was absolute, the ability very considerable, and yet careful comparison of the copies with the originals, while demonstrating even more fully our debt to Toschi in showing how much since the engraver did his work has actually faded from the plaster beyond deciphering, shows also that the disciple, with all his piety, somewhat weakened his subject. He has at once refined (in the sense of smoothing and softening) the modelling, and slightly vulgarized the spirit of these great works. The refinement probably proceeded from the damaged condition of the frescoes; that is to say, where Correggio's modelling could no longer be seen, Toschi put in that of the Italian *settecento*, and the vulgarization again comes from the fact that the engraver lived in the century of Tiepolo, not in that of Raphael.

Looking, then, at details, we note first of all the disadvantage of realistic sacrifice to foreshortening. Christ and the Madonna, whose Ascension forms the

## ITALIAN CITIES

subject of Correggio's two cycles, are the pettiest things in the whole composition. Madonna may not soar freely, but must be supported, and is violently foreshortened; hence her body is all knees and feet, her face all chin and nostrils, while the frog-like attitude of the Saviour has been cited for three centuries. The outer rim of the garland of angels is fringed with legs which kick rather aggressively and monotonously; somewhat more of compositional spacing, through the use of cloud to cover and simplify here and there, would have bettered the effect. It is, however, quite possible that the flesh tones may have darkened and the clouds remained light, thereby changing and unduly emphasizing the painter's original intention.

In examining the figures that stand about the balustrade, one questions the entire justice of Burckhardt's and Symonds's strictures. Some of the youthful figures are brilliantly beautiful; to say that they are fauns is to say hardly enough, for if Michelangelo's people are fitted to strive and suffer for the Almighty, these may surely sing his praises.

If we consider them technically, we recognize Correggio's debt to Mantegna, and note that the Parmesan looked closely indeed at those elephant-riding, candelabrum-lighting youths of the "Triumph of Cæsar," and it is interesting to see how instinctively this painter of the delicately joyous, even of

## PARMA

the ecstatic, noted and assimilated the more delightful qualities of the proud, severe, and somewhat hard Paduan master. The draperies in the Duomo frescoes—as so often in other works of Correggio—are in many cases bad; but the old men who wear them, bending backward against the balustrade, are much finer and less sentimental in the originals than in the translations of Toschi.

In San Giovanni Evangelista the saints of the pendentives are more carefully and closely studied than those of the Duomo, though they are not so free and bold; in the cupola the Saint John kneeling on his mountain summit is no longer the plump, good-natured, half-apostle, half-Hercules affected by Correggio, but an emaciated seer of visions whose fire and beauty go far to redeem the painter from the charge that his old men are not virile.

Nevertheless, the more one studies it, the more one feels that in spite of its confusion, the Assumption of the Duomo is a greater and riper work than the Ascension in San Giovanni, and yields Correggio's truest title to fame. In blithe force, spontaneity, and invention, perhaps most of all in daring, it is unequalled, and its painter might sign it Antonius Audax as well and quite as aptly as Antonius Lætus.

If Correggio's true throne was in the Cathedral of

## ITALIAN CITIES

Parma, we must not forget that he subjugated Europe for three centuries after his death by his smaller works: his six great altar-pieces, which include the "Night" and the "San Girolamo," and his mythological pictures, such as the Antiope, Leda, and Danaë, and his various Holy Families.

In his larger works he rules most potently by power and sweep, in his smaller ones by charm. There are those, and we are among them, who find many of his Madonnas of the lesser panels insipidly sweet, but there is magic in the poorest of them, and in several of the large altar-pieces this magic is all-compelling. Nevertheless we find in them the same faults as in the frescoes. There is the same indifference to grandeur of line, the same absence of severity of any kind, the same carelessness in the drawing and composition of drapery. It would be hard to discover in the range of Italian art a more ill-composed bit of draping than that of Saint Joseph in the "Scodella Madonna." Too often the master placed entirely lovely heads upon bodies whose silhouette was most awkward, the lack of grace proceeding especially from two causes,—the tendency to throw out the hip in a *desinvoltura* which results in lack of equilibrium or at least of stability, and his love of foreshortening, which now and again makes Madonna upon her throne unpleasantly high-kneed and thickset in appearance. The modern character

## PARMA

of many of his figures is astonishing; that of the Magdalen, for instance, in the "San Girolamo," while certain details such as the white-capped girl in the "Nativity" of Dresden seem like bits out of an eighteenth-century picture. Undoubtedly this is because the painters of the *seicento* and *settecento* admired and were greatly influenced by him. Another peculiarity is his indifference to the conventional types of sacred and holy personages, and which is more noticeable in his altar-pieces than in his frescoes.

Very secular performances are some of them; the San Giorgio altar-piece of Dresden, for instance, in which the figure of John the Baptist is perhaps the most notable example of the artist's strange conception of a saintly personage. Could any one recognize the Precursor in this tall youth, round-hipped as a woman, pointing to the Christ-child and turning his face to the spectator with a smile more than half mocking, as if he found the whole thing an excellent piece of diversion. This time we have a faun indeed, a faun with goatskin and all, and with undoubtedly a wholly unascetic and natural aptitude for locusts and wild honey. The delightful baby in the foreground has no room in him for anything but mischief; the Christ-child, held by a squat and ill-composed Madonna, is in playful mood, everybody is *débonnair* except Saint Francis, who is sentimental and will be admired and imitated by seventeenth-cen-



## ITALIAN CITIES

tury painters. Saint George, the eponym of the picture, is frank and virile, and for a wonder Correggio has set him firmly on his legs, *il est bien campé*, the French would say. Only too often Correggio lets his standing figures sway like the John Baptist aforesaid, or tumble about as do Jerome in the "Giorno," and Joseph in the "Scodella."

The background of the picture is full of architectural ornaments which Mantegna would have chastened greatly; here surely are reservations enough, and yet the San Giorgio altar-piece even in a black and white reproduction is beautiful from one corner to the other. Indeed, it shows well in black and white, for the Dresden Correggios have suffered in color, while the "Scodella" and the "Giorno," which Parma has retained, have been better treated, — that is to say, less retouched, than some of the former.

They vary under varying conditions; in fair weather the San Girolamo or "Giorno," as it is often called, is golden and beautiful, and there is no doubt in any weather about the charm of the very modern-looking Magdalen, or the *morbidezza* in the treatment of her face, and of the Christ-child's foot which she presses against her cheek, but on dark days the flesh seems brown in the shadows, and the whole picture has a gummy look, while in the "Scodella" the orange drapery is heavy in color and the blue is raw. On the whole the "Deposition" and the

## PARMA

"Martyrdom of Flavius and Placida," both of which are also in the pinacoteca, while much less sympathetic in character, are better and more Correggio-like in color.

Correggio's indifference to grand lines is constantly seen both in his bodies and his draperies. Michelangelo, Raphael, or Titian would not have tolerated the awkward lines in the "Antiope" of the Louvre, yet it is very beautiful because of the color which is Correggio's at his best point in oil-painting.

It is not easy to write of Allegri's color; there seems to be nothing to particularize save in the frescoes, where he has made a rainbow of opalescent cloud and opalescent flesh. In his best easel pictures it is at once natural and golden; apparently his draperies meant nothing to him, his flesh everything. There is with him none of the organ tone of Byzantine or Venetian color; there are, if the musical simile may be followed, no sudden changes, no bursts from minor into major; nor does Correggio say with Veronese: "I will compose in great masses of blue and red and yellow brocades until I have a bouquet of gorgeous tints," he is satisfied with warm, healthy flesh; he is not grandly mysterious like Rembrandt, yet he steeps his whole canvas in a light-filled medium which penetrates and goes behind things just as it does in Dutch pictures, only with

## ITALIAN CITIES

Correggio these things are flying angels instead of Flemish cobblers cross-legged on counters, nymphs and Cupids in place of peasants at a kermesse.

Out of these Nymphs and Cupids the master made the material of his third cycle of frescoes in Parma, that of the Camera di San Paolo.

The room is square with a high sixteen-sided, vaulted roof. Correggio has borrowed Mantegna's trellis-work from the "Madonna della Vittoria" and has trained it all over the vaulting. Each of the sixteen ribbed spaces terminates below with a lunette and is pierced in the centre with an oval; through these ovals look the Cupids in groups of two; in the lunettes are the nymphs and other mythological personages, in very pleasing monochrome chiaro-scuro. The Cupids are more thickset and less lovely than are the children of the Duomo and San Giovanni, but they are full of life.

These frescoes, say the guidebooks, "are better preserved than are Correggio's others;" so in a way they are, but though they have kept their surface, they have darkened, been smoked, perhaps, and the color has lost its freshness far more than upon the crumbling stucco of the Duomo's cupola.

We have said that in Correggio's frescoes he rules by power, in his easel pictures by compelling charm. To say how compelling, one has only to recount their migrations and vicissitudes. Signor Ricci

gives chapters to their odyssey, and even a briefest epitome of some of their adventures is interesting.

By the year 1580 or so Italians had forgotten all about *quattrocento* masters; the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, on the contrary, were treasured, and no pictures were more loved at home or coveted abroad than Correggio's. They were covertly stolen, openly seized, and captured on the battlefield in the enemy's baggage; they were the cause of riots, of deputations; they endangered the safety of cities; they were carried to Paris by republicans and to Stockholm by sovereigns; worst of all, were mercilessly cleaned, restored, and overpainted.

Let us take the six great altar-pieces, — the Nativity, the St. Sebastian, the St. George, the St. Francis, the Scodella, and the San Girolamo. The four first went to Dresden as a result of the famous purchase made by the Elector of Saxony from the Duke of Modena in 1746.

The St. Francis was painted in 1515 for a monastery in the town of Correggio, Allegri's birthplace. It remained *in situ* till 1638; then Jean Boulanger, a French painter and envoy of the Duke of Modena (sovereign of Correggio), installed himself in the church to make a copy and soon after departed. A little later it was rumored that he had carried off the picture, the St. Francis. The citizens rang the

## ITALIAN CITIES

alarm bell, went in deputation to Molza, the Duke's representative, and denounced the theft of the altar-piece; Molza wrote to the Duke and laughed in his sleeve: presently the picture appeared openly in the ducal collection.

As for the St. Sebastian, somewhat before 1611 Ercole dell' Abate exposed it to the sun to "make its colors blend;" another artist "repaired it;" then Flaminio Torri repainted it almost entirely; last of all, it was "scratched" during transportation to Dresden, says Raphael Mengs, and restored in that city; when Palmaroli removed the overpaints, he brought to light cherubs' heads which had wholly disappeared. It is no wonder that the Dresden altar-pieces have lost somewhat of Allegri's color.

The beautiful "Nativity" more popularly known as Correggio's "Night" was ordered by Alberto Pratoneri for a church in Reggio and finished in 1530. Already in 1587 the Estensi coveted it, trying to secure it by negotiation, and a century later they stole it outright.

The "Madonna of San Giorgio," the secular character of which as a picture we have already mentioned, was painted for the *Scuola* of Saint Peter Martyr in Modena, and was therefore directly under the claws of the covetous Este dukes; the ambassador of the latter to the French court promised the picture to the Abbé Dubois in return for diplomatic

## PARMA

service; the Duke disavowed the promise, though the frightened envoy declared that the refusal might cost him the city of Mirandola. Twenty years later the Duke forcibly removed the work from the church to his private gallery, and thus four of these famous altar-pieces passed by way of Modena to Dresden.

The San Girolamo, the "Day" of Correggio, remained in the church of Sant' Antonio till the beginning of the eighteenth century, then as the church was rebuilding, and funds were lacking, the Preceptor wished to sell the picture, but Duke Francesco Farnese refused to permit the sale. Later it was reported that two kings were disputing for the picture's purchase; then Don Philippe de Bourbon, Duke of Parma, placed it in the Accademia. There it seemed safe, but in 1796 it made the journey to Paris with the other masterpieces. Francesco Rosaspina wrote of it: "The princes have lost all power of guiding us. They cannot foresee things which those of low rank would not fail to perceive and prepare against. And *we* have to pay the penalty of their folly! I am so overcome that I seem to have lost my wits and appetite together!" In 1815, however, it returned to Milan, and a year later to Parma, this time to stay.

The last picture of the series, the "Madonna della Scodella," was the most fortunate of all, escaping

## ITALIAN CITIES

the attempts made to carry it off until 1796, when it went to Paris, but came back with the San Girolamo.

The chroniclers and Vasari in particular have woven a kind of romance about Correggio; he has been represented as miserably poor, and entirely self-made, having had no artistic environment. Vasari recounts the famous story that, having been paid sixty *scudi* in copper, Antonio tried to carry them on foot to his native town of Correggio, and that from heat and fatigue he contracted a fever of which he died. This factitious and unnecessary enhancement of the interest attaching to him must be renounced. He was born about 1494, and towards 1534 his father, Pellegrino Allegri, who possessed a very fair landed property, gave a suitable dowry to the daughter of Antonio, who also inherited from his maternal uncle, Francesco Aromani. After the death of Correggio the governor of Parma, Alessandro Caccia, wrote to the Duke of Mantua, "I hear that he has made comfortable provision for his heirs." This disposes at once of the stories of exaggerated poverty and of exaggerated prosperity which various writers have told concerning the family of the painter. His artistic success was commercially considerable, though not what it should have been. He had an important commission when he was still a minor, and was kept busy through all

## PARMA

his short life, counting very great personages among his patrons.

As for his artistic environment, the theory now accepted is that he derived from the Ferrarese school; he visited Mantua and was powerfully influenced by the great Mantegna, and although it is probable that he never saw Rome, it is still more probable that he did have a suggestion and more than a suggestion of Raphael's and Michelangelo's great creations through *repliche*, drawings and engravings of their works. It must be remembered that the character of the genius of the Roman school was such that a drawing or a black and white reproduction of one of its masterpieces might act as an inspirational force of highest order, whereas the works of Giorgione and Titian, depending as they do upon qualities which cannot be perfectly translated into black and white, have to be seen to be stimulating. Raphael's works were popularized by engraving at an early date, and his Sistine Madonna could be seen in Piacenza, which was almost at Correggio's doors, but even if our master had access to no others, the frescoes and easel pictures of Mantegna would in themselves have sufficed to inspire an artist of Correggio's calibre, while the works of Leonardo must in turn have powerfully affected one to whom chiaroscuro was an instinctive means of expression.



## ITALIAN CITIES

Though his own family was so modest in station, Antonio grew up as the *protégé* of Veronica Gambara and close to the refinements of a court. Nothing is more special to Italy of the Renaissance than is the existence of a great number of tiny but cultivated capitals, to which the Weimar of the last century affords a modern parallel. Antonio was protected by Veronica, who was wife of the Lord of Correggio, and he was even one of the witnesses to the betrothal settlement of Chiara di Gianfrancesco da Correggio when she was affianced to Ippolito, the son of Veronica. Veronica Gambara was an intimate friend and correspondent of Isabella d'Este, "the great marchioness," the most famous lady of her time in North Italy, and it is highly probable that when Antonio went to Mantua he was recommended to Isabella by Veronica.

Thus modern research has proved that Vasari wholly mistook the tragedy of Correggio's life, for the tragedy came not from pinching want, but from lack of really adequate appreciation. He was busy, had many patrons, but none of them recognized him for what he was, — the one man who, just as Raphael died, stood ready to take up his succession, in a more modern, less monumental way, in lighter vein, if you will, but powerfully and worthily. When Bembo, boasted connoisseur as he was, saw the works of Antonio, he passed them by unheeding,

## PARMA

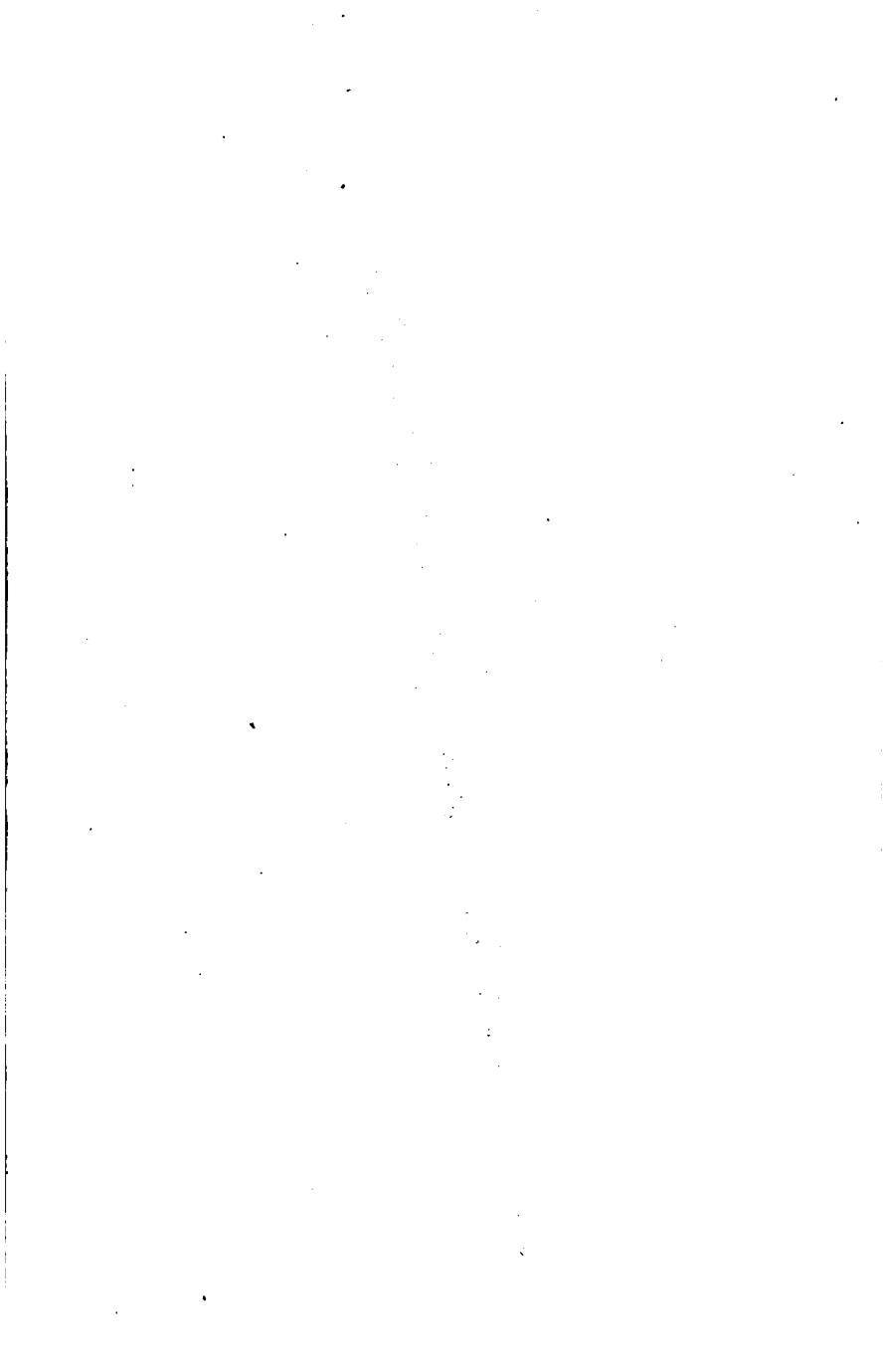
and at the meridian of the Renaissance, when great artists were petted by popes and princes, and honored and loved by their fellows, Correggio, at the very time that he was making not only his native town, but also his provincial capital of Parma, immortal, was himself, if we compare him with Leonardo, Raphael, or Michelangelo, living in positive obscurity. This neglect could not but astonish a Florentine or a Roman artist who saw his works, and the tradition of it evidently grew into the legend of the tragedy which Vasari recounts, the story of the copper *scudi*. That Antonio did suffer from the inability to give entire vent to his artistic endeavor is only too well proved by the fact that he never went to Rome, Florence, or further afield than Mantua, although in Parma itself, if we reckon wall surface as a criterion, few painters have had an ampler opportunity, while hardly any have used it so well. But complete appreciation was what he lacked, and the latter part of his life was evidently saddened by the lack of sympathy of his Parmesan patrons. The monks did not spare criticism of his frescoes in the Duomo, and leaving his work unfinished, Correggio, this mighty master whose name counts among the six or eight most famous in the history of art, retired to his obscure native town and ended his days there.

But if the work in the Cathedral was too original,

## ITALIAN CITIES

too new, not to shock the Parmesan clergy, if a canon satirizing its one weakness and blind to its power could call it "a hash of frogs," there soon came those trained to discern and who, having eyes, saw. "Reverse the cupola and fill it with gold," said Titian, "and even that will not represent its worth." "Raphael himself has not equalled it," wrote Agostino Caracci. The astonishing Giambattista Tiepolo, last of the great Italian masters, came to look and learn, and he is less astonishing when we have seen what he saw. "Have Correggio's Putti grown up yet and walked out of their frames?" Guido Reni was wont to ask, whenever he met a citizen of Modena, the town which held so many of Antonio's masterpieces. These men knew Correggio for what he was, one who had aided Leonardo and Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian, to place the topmost stones of the shrine which Italy builded to the arts.

END OF VOL. I







**FA656.6**

Italian cities,  
Fine Arts Library

**AXL2200**



**3 2044 033 744 285**

This book should be returned to  
the Library on or before the last date  
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred  
by retaining it beyond the specified  
time.

Please return promptly.

~~APR 22 '52 H~~



